



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

Nakagami Kenji:
Paradox and the Representation of
the Silenced Voice

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Arts)
University of Tasmania, May 2015

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Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Date: 19-10-2015.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to Barbara Hartley, my Ph.D supervisor at the University of Tasmania, for her valuable guidance and advice. Her wisdom, knowledge and commitment inspired and motivated me and I feel indebted for her earnest help and encouragement.

Sincere thanks are also due to:

Yōji Hashimoto, Katsuhiko Suganuma, and Nicki Tarulevics of the University of Tasmania for their ongoing support and assistance.

Lecturers and staff members of Kumano University, including, Nori Nakagami, Shūji Takazawa, Masaki Waga, Yūichi Tsujimoto, Iwao Matsumoto, Yūji Morimoto and Teruhiko Higashi, for sharing their best thoughts and memories of Nakagami Kenji.

Naomi Watanabe who kindly accepted to act as my supervisor during my research at Waseda University as a Japan Foundation Fellow.

Teru and Yukie Shimamura in appreciation for their hospitality during my stay in Sangenjaya. Fukuko Kobayashi of Waseda University and Shōji Hidaka and Mayako Murai of Kanagawa University who warmly welcomed me as a visiting scholar in their workshops, respectively. Tsuyoshi and Michiko Kuribayashi, Yōko Konishi, and Tsuneo Nakamori for their warm receptions at the Fire Festival in Shingū.

Tomoko Aoyama and Mats Karlsson for their incisive comments on my thesis.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki for her insightful suggestions on my research, Mayumi Shinozaki for her support during my research at the National Library of Australia.

Maria Flutsch for her proofreading of my thesis.

Eiko Osaka, Jenny Scott, Yōko Kawasaki, Yasushirō Ishii, Satoshi Kamijō and Yasutomo Satō who generously gave me their time in Tokyo.

All those who gave me great support: Donald, Mikako, Mei, Mia, Aneita, Steve, Emerald, Manabu, Masa, Angela, Motoko, Hitomi, Lina, Terry, Sally, Alex, Rie, Grant and Hide.

My parents in Japan, Shigeru and Reiko Iwata, and also my brother Kōichi and his family who have always believed in me and wished for my success.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my daughter, Mimori, for her limitless patience and love. Without the assistance of all these people, this study would never have been completed.

Finally, I give sincere thanks to Nakagami Kenji whose narratives have graced my life.

— *Kokorozashi o tsugu* —

Abstract

How does a writer represent the voice of the voiceless? This is the primary question in my reading of Burakumin writer, Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992). My project explores Nakagami's representation of the voices of voiceless (*mukoku*) people – especially Burakumin people – who are oppressed by mainstream Japanese social structures. Nakagami was always conscious of the fact that, in spite of his own background, his privilege as a writer made it difficult for him to 'represent' the voices of the dispossessed. This 'paradox of representing the silenced voice' is the key theme of my thesis. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak theorises the (im)possibility of representing the voice of 'subalterns,' those oppressed by ideologies such as imperialism, patriarchy and heteronormativity. Arguing that the oppressed Burakumin peoples depicted in Nakagami's narratives are Japan's 'subalterns,' I draw on Spivak to analyse Nakagami's material. There is no other study, in either Japanese or English that reads Nakagami through Spivak's ground-breaking ideas. Spivak's work reveals and transcends the complicity of Western (Northern, in Gramsci's terms) intellectuals in the suppression of the non-West (or South). I argue that Nakagami similarly interrogates the relationship between mainstream and marginalised in Japan. Nakagami's narratives have a strong geopolitical perspective that reveals the 'otherness' of his birthplace, Kumano. Nakagami identifies Kumano as Japan's marginalised 'South.'

I am particularly interested in drawing on Spivak, and theorists such as Butler and Sedgwick, to profile Nakagami's depiction of marginalised Japanese women, especially Burakumin women. I wish to help readers hear the voices of these women who are often violated sexually by the men given a profile in much Nakagami scholarship. Firstly, I will revisit the voices of key male characters, and the voice of Nakagami himself, in order better to understand the role these men play in suppressing women's stories. Through reviewing conflicts between masculine pairs, especially the father and son, I will note how misogynistic homosocial practices silence the voices of the women associated with these males.

The analysis references a selection of both well-known and little read Nakagami narratives. Chapter One examines the 1978 travel journal, *Kishū: ki no kuni, ne no kuni monogatari* (*Kishū: A Tale of the Country of Trees, the Country of Roots*), as an early representation of the silenced Kumano Burakumin voice. Chapter Two focuses on the 1976 short story, 'Rakudo' (Paradise) little discussed in existing scholarship, to explore the depiction of the voice of a violent young patriarch and the defiance expressed by the silence

of his wife. Chapter Three considers Nakagami's masterpiece, the Akiyuki trilogy. Rather than the better known 1976 and 1977 works, 'Misaki' (The Cape) and *Kareki nada* (*The Sea of Withered Trees*), close attention is given to *Chi no hate shijō no toki* (1983, *The End of the Earth, Supreme Time*), written *after* Nakagami's declaration of his Burakumin background.

The second half of the thesis focuses directly on the rarely heard voices of Burakumin women. I profile these women as independent subjects, rather than objects of male interaction. Chapters Four and Five introduce women from the Akiyuki trilogy. Satoko, the prostitute who unknowingly commits incest with her half-brother, Akiyuki, becomes a pawn in the power struggle between her father and half-brother. The aged 'oldest sister,' Yuki, sacrificed her youth in a brothel to feed her father-less family. Moyo remains traumatised by the rape that resulted in the conception of her now adult son. Nakagami's most celebrated woman character, Oryū no oba, the mid-wife and community mother of the *buraku* community, from *Sen'nen no yuraku* (1982, *A Thousand Years of Pleasure*), is also discussed to support my interpretation of Burakumin women. Finally, I examine the writer's last published novel, *Keibetsu* (1992, *Scorn*), with its account of the Tokyo topless dancer, Machiko, who migrates to her husband's rural 'hometown' where she is oppressed and branded as immoral by the gaze of her partner's community. My close reading of Nakagami's representation of the voice of these sexually stigmatised women is my unique contribution to Nakagami scholarship.

Matters of Technical Presentation of the Thesis

Japanese and Korean names are presented, after the convention in these countries, with surname first and given name following. The exception to this is the case of writers who have written and published in English, such as Yumiko Iida. In the case of Japanese works which are translated into English, I present the writer's name in Japanese order and spelling, even when the English translation gives the name in Western convention. For example, in the case of the English translation of Karatani Kōjin's works, the author's name is usually presented as Kojin Karatani. I retain Japanese convention with respect to the use of his name. After the first reference I refer to writers in the manner that is the common practice in the literature. Sometimes this means referring to them by their given rather than family name. For example, Tayama Katai is referred to as Katai after the first reference because this is the convention in Japanese literary discourse.

Multiple brief quotations from the same source within a single paragraph in this thesis are cited in the final appearance within the paragraph. Three periods enclosed in square brackets are used to indicate omissions of words in a cited quote. Modified words and expressions are also placed in square brackets. All translations of Japanese language material are my own, unless otherwise cited. I note if I have modified an already published English translation.

I refer to the fourth edition of *Monumenta Nipponica Style Sheet* (2008, published by Sophia University) for referencing, footnotes and bibliographic matters in the thesis.

Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality	II
Authority of Access	III
Statement of Ethical Conduct	IV
Acknowledgements	V
Abstract	VI
Matters of Technical Presentation of the Thesis	VII
Table of Contents	IX

Introduction

Prologue	1
The Aim of the Thesis	4
Significance of the Thesis Contribution to Existing Nakagami Scholarship	7
Existing Nakagami Scholarship	8
Overview of the Structure of the Discussion	12
The Historical Burakumin Context	21
The Assimilation Policy for the Burakumin	26
The Burakumin Issues (<i>Buraku Mondai</i>)	28
Nakagami's Criticism of the Literature of Burakumin Issues	30
The Sayama Incident	31
The First Child Born from the Encounter of Burakumin and Letters	34

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework: Paradox of the Representation

Nakagami's Geopolitical Perspective of Kishū Kumano	39
Ideology, Hegemony and Subaltern: Gramsci's Geopolitical Perspective of the South	44
Spivak: A Postcolonial Scholar of Hybridity	52
Nakagami: A Writer neither Central nor Peripheral	54
The Theory of Representation	57
The Postcolonial/Post-structural Reading of Marx	60
Spivak's Criticism of Foucault and Deleuze	62
The Subaltern Cannot Speak: Spivak's Representation of the Subaltern Woman's Voice	64
Nakagami's Representation of the Silenced Burakumin Voice	72

Chapter Two

A Voice of a Violent Patriarch and the Silence of the Wife

Nakagami and Japanese Naturalist 'I-novel' Tradition	79
The Paradox of the I-novel	80
'Rakudo' as the Discourse of the Impotent Patriarch	84
Voice of the Woman in 'Rakudo'	95

Chapter Three

The Akiyuki Trilogy:

A Narrative of a Transgressive Son and the Last Days of the Outcaste Community

The Akiyuki Trilogy	100
Subaltern Family Tragedy	103
Rumour: Voice of Subaltern Community	107
Incest and Fratricide as Patricide	109
Discourse of Narrative as Law/System	117
'Law as Narrative': Hasumi Shigehiko's Interpretation of <i>Kareki nada</i>	118
Nakagami's View of Narrative	120
<i>Kishū</i> : Trip to Search for the Roots of <i>Monogatari</i>	123
Criticism of <i>Chi No Hate Shijō No Toki</i>	125
Dismantlement of the Burakumin Homeland	127
Interchangeable Relationship between Father and Son	129
Invalidated Father	132
The End of Community	135
'Becoming a Burakumin': The Voice of a Burakumin Man	137
The Father's Obsession for Unbeatable Paternity	140
Self-disruption of the Father	142

Chapter Four

Voice of an Incestuous Sister

An Incestuous Sister Satoko	147
A Critique of Ambivalent Masculinist Interpretations of Nakagami	148
Male Homosocial Desire and the Traffic in Women	154
<i>Kyōdai shinjū</i> : A Ballad of Brother and Sister Double Suicide	158
<i>Kyōdai shinjū</i> and Mill Girls (<i>Jokō</i>)	163
<i>Imo no chikara</i> : Power of Women	167

Sisters as Working Women	172
Okiyo and Antigone: The Incestuous Sisters in Archetypical Narratives	174
Okiyo: A Sister who Plots Double Suicide with the Brother	180
Longing For the Brother and Sister Double Suicide	185
The Burakumin Ballad and Ancient <i>Kojiki</i> Myth	187
The Incestuous Sister's Love for and Fear of the Brother	190
 Chapter Five	
Voice of the Burakumin Aged Women	
The Perspective of the <i>Omina</i> (Old Woman)	198
'Foreclosed' Native Informant and Aged Burakumin Women	203
<i>Sen'nen no yuraku</i> : The Subaltern Burakumin Narrative	204
The Burakumin <i>Omina</i> and Myth of the Outcaste Clan	206
The Burakumin Women after Dismantlement of the Community	214
Voice of the Burakumin Eldest Sister	216
The 'Vagina Monologue' of the Burakumin Aged Woman	220
The Voice of the Aged Mute Woman	226
 Chapter Six	
<i>Keibetsu</i> : Representing Woman as a Desiring Subject	
Nakagami's Last Narrative	233
The <i>Keibetsu</i> Narrative	235
The Heroine as a Source of 'Mystery'	240
A Daring Woman in <i>Tokyo Love Story</i>	245
The Daring Voices of Sex Workers	248
A Woman Outsider in the Homosocial Community	253
A Wife who Voluntarily Creates Homosocial Triangles	256
Co-dependency between a Gambling Addict and the Woman who Loves Him Too Much	258
A Woman who 'Scorns' a Dead Man	262
 Conclusion	
Bibliography	
Appendix	
1. The Map of the Kii Peninsula	
2. Akiyuki's Family Tree	

Nakagami Kenji: Paradox and the Representation of the Silenced Voice

Introduction

Prologue

This thesis provides a reading of selected works by Nakagami Kenji (1946-1992), the Burakumin or Japanese outcaste writer, in order to investigate the writer's representation of the voice of the *mukoku*, the socially silenced in Japan. Nakagami, the only Burakumin person to win the prestigious Akutagawa Literary Award and the first post-war born writer to do so, was born in 1946 in the Kasuga district of the city of Shingū,¹ Wakayama Prefecture. Set on the eastern coast of the Kii Peninsula at the mouth of the Kumano River, over a vast forest far south of Kyoto, Shingū is the largest centre in the region known as Kishū Kumano, which encompasses Wakayama Prefecture and sections of Mie Prefecture.² Nakagami's birthplace, Kasuga, was one of Shingū's *hisabetsu buraku* (Burakumin districts),³ the areas throughout Japan that are associated in the public imagination with the 'outcaste' groups of the premodern era.⁴ Nakagami's narratives often depict the otherness of Kishū Kumano, long regarded as *komoriku*, a hidden country, on the periphery of Japan. An important objective of Nakagami's writing is to depict various kinds of people, especially Burakumin people, who are oppressed by

¹ The population of Shingū is approximately 31,000 in 2015. See city of Shingū official cite (*Wakayama ken Shingū shi*).

² The Kii peninsula (which is also called by its traditional name, Kishū) consists of Wakayama Prefecture, Mie prefecture and Nara Prefecture.

³ The definition and the context of *hisabetsu buraku* will be explained in great detail in a later section of the introduction.

⁴ The term 'outcaste' is commonly used in English language scholarship for Burakumin people. It is not used in Japanese discourse. The term should not be associated with the better known Indian Dalit.

the exclusionary systems of hegemonic Japanese thought, and the social structures created by these systems. To Nakagami, these systems deny the principle and lived experience of ‘difference.’

What is it to read the literature of Nakagami Kenji? For those interested in Nakagami as a Burakumin writer, it is to read the experience of this group of people in Japan’s outcaste community. Some readers will enjoy the legends and histories of wandering Kumano nobles that are frequently inscribed in the writer’s narratives. Through reading Nakagami’s saga of the son’s desire to violate taboos such as patricide, fratricide and incest, many people will recognise the cyclic repetition of both Japanese and Western ancient myths, in addition to a Freudian psychoanalytic metanarrative. Some admire the way in which Nakagami’s 1976 Akutagawa prize-winning narrative, ‘Misaki’ (1976, *The Cape*), brought new vitality to the traditional Japanese literary world, while others emphasise the writer’s role as the last novelist to emerge from that tradition. There are also readers who hear the vigour of the rhythm and ‘pulse’⁵ that echoes from the depths of Nakagami’s language, likening the reading of his texts to listening to a John Coltrane jazz performance⁶ or an Anton Bruckner symphony.⁷ I agree with one brief obituary for Nakagami published in *TIME* in August 1992: ‘Nakagami Kenji, died aged 46, is a novelist known for his startlingly sensual prose about Japan’s social outcaste.’⁸ Japanese critic, Asada Akira (b. 1957), regarded this obituary as the most ‘correct account’ of Nakagami and his contribution as a novelist.⁹

⁵ Nakazawa 1995, p. 1.

⁶ Ono 1985, p. 80-83.

⁷ Karatani and Kawakami 1996, p. 160-161.

⁸ See an obituary of Nakagami in *TIME* (August, 1992). This is cited in Asada 1996, p. 23.

⁹ Asada 1996, p. 23

It is now more than twenty years since Nakagami died from kidney cancer at the age of forty-six. At the time of his death I was a college student in Japan and I remember that few Nakagami works could be found on the shelves of bookstores in suburban Nagoya where I lived. According to Karatani Kōjin (b. 1941), the Japanese critic who was also Nakagami's long-term friend, this was the case also in bookshops in Tokyo and even in the public library in the writer's hometown of Shingū.¹⁰ Certainly, Nakagami's books have never had the popularity of, for example, the works of Murakami Haruki (b. 1949). To be honest, as a student, I found it quite difficult to read Nakagami. Yet, although his language did not always permit an inexperienced girl to indulge in the pleasure of his narrative world, the greeting used between the Burakumin women who featured in his narratives, '*Ine, tsurai ne*' (Things are hard, aren't they, sister?), embedded itself in my heart. During the two decades that have passed, I often felt that dialogue as my own and so I opened his books again. As the quote above indicates and as will become apparent in the second half of the thesis, it was the dialogue of the women in Nakagami's narratives that made the strongest impact on me. While Nakagami is often read as a masculinist writer, with significant critical attention being given to his male characters, I wish to expand this interpretation by giving a voice also to a number of the previously overlooked women in his texts.

In this introduction to the thesis, I will articulate the aim of my project and the nature of my contribution to existing Nakagami scholarship. I will also present a brief summary of the body of critical works on Nakagami in Japanese and English. I will then provide an overview of the structure of my discussion, including reference to the texts that will be analysed and my reasons for the choice of these among the many possibilities offered by Nakagami's collected works. The thesis draws on the theoretical discussions of a number of scholars including Judith

¹⁰ Hasumi, Watanabe, Asada and Karatani 1994, p. 18.

Butler (b. 1956), Eve Sedgwick (1950-2009), Karatani Kōjin and Mizuta Noriko (b. 1937). The principal theoretical support for my discussion, however, comes from the Indian-American scholar, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (b. 1942). I will explain how the work of Spivak, recognised as a leading authority in the field of postcolonial studies, provides an ideal framework for an important reading of Nakagami's work. As I explain later this is not an attempt to situate my project in the field of postcolonial studies. Rather, I appropriate aspects of that theoretical paradigm to inform my reading of Nakagami's work. The second half of the Introduction will provide fundamental background information about the oppressed status of the Burakumin. There will also be reference to Nakagami's view of discrimination against the Burakumin as a 'narrative' informed by three elements: 'sex, violence, and religion.'¹¹ I will also explain how this Burakumin man became a writer.

The Aim of the Thesis

How does a writer represent the voice of the voiceless? This is the primary question in my reading of the literature of Nakagami Kenji. My project explores Nakagami's representation of the voices of voiceless (*mukoku*) people, those who are socially oppressed by mainstream hegemonic structures in Japan. Although Nakagami achieved prominence as a writer of narratives of the Burakumin, the outcaste people of Japan, his representations of the marginalised includes ethnic minorities, handicapped people, traumatised people, the aged and sex workers. Given his privileged position as a writer, Nakagami was conscious that the silenced voice which he sought to 'hear' and 'represent' was possibly 'foreclosed,' that is, prevented by

¹¹ NKZ 15, p. 167.

oppressive social structures from ever being heard. This contradiction, which I refer to as ‘the paradox of representing the silenced voice,’ is the theme of the thesis. In order to understand this paradox, I will draw on the work of Spivak, who has theorised the (im)possibility of representing the voice of ‘subalterns,’ people who are oppressed at multiple levels by ideologies such as imperialism, patriarchy and heteronormativity. Arguing that the Burakumin, especially women, and other oppressed peoples depicted in Nakagami’s narratives, are Japan’s ‘subaltern,’ I analyse Nakagami’s work through the framework of Spivak’s theory. While there is a large body of Japanese language Nakagami scholarship and a growing body in English, there is no other study that reads this writer through Spivak’s ground-breaking ideas.

Just as Spivak seeks to reveal and transcend in her work the complicity of the Western – or Northern, in terms of the Italian thinker, Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) – intellectual or person ‘of letters’ in the suppression of the non-Western – Gramsci’s Southern – marginalised, I argue that Nakagami seeks in his writing to interrogate the relationship between mainstream hegemonic structures in Japan and the marginalised in that site. In other words, Nakagami’s narratives have a strong geopolitical perspective in that they reveal the ‘otherness’ of his birthplace, Kumano, which the writer identifies as Japan’s marginalised ‘South.’ Nakagami’s geopolitical perspective is a key theme of the thesis and I will discuss this detail later in the thesis.

I am particularly interested in drawing on the work of Spivak, and other theorists such as Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick, to profile Nakagami’s depiction of marginalised Japanese women, often Burakumin women. I wish to help Nakagami’s readers hear the voices of these women which, with one notable exception referred to below, have been largely erased from

Nakagami scholarship. While Nakagami's male characters have received on-going attention, little interest has been shown in the women whom these men sexually violate. Prior to considering these women, I will revisit the voices of key male characters in order to understand better the role they play in suppressing the stories of the woman depicted. Through reviewing the conflicts between masculine pairs such as father/son, half-brother/half-brother and male friend/male friend, I will note how misogynistic homosocial practices both rationalise the male conflicts depicted and render meaningless the voices of the woman nearby.

The second half of the thesis focuses directly on Burakumin women's voices. Chapters Four and Five introduce key women from the Akiyuki trilogy, who are almost entirely absent as subjects with agency from existing Nakagami scholarship. While Satoko, the prostitute who unknowingly commits incest with her half-brother, Akiyuki, is discussed in other Akiyuki trilogy scholarship, this is generally only to the extent that she is considered as a 'prop' or a 'foil' in discussions of Akiyuki himself. While I make reference to Oryū no oba (Aunt Ryū), from *Sen'nen no yuraku* (1982, *A Thousand Years of Pleasure*), perhaps the most celebrated woman from Nakagami's texts, I do so mainly in order to compare her shaman-like narratorial powers with the absence of these powers in two older women from the Akiyuki trilogy. These women are Yuki, a former prostitute, and Moyo, a traumatised mute. I also profile Machiko, the topless dancer protagonist of *Keibetsu* (1992, *Scorn*), who is oppressed by the gaze of her partner's community which brands her an immoral woman.

Word length restraints prevent me from here discussing in detail Nakagami's early essays which provide accounts of his 1968 New Left activism, memories of his twenty-four-year-old half-brother who suicided, and the impression made on the writer by the young offender,

Nagayama Norio (1949-1997), who killed four people in 1968. Many key scholars of Nakagami studies such as Hasumi Shigehiko (b. 1936), Karatani Kōjin, and Yomota Inuhiko (b. 1953) in Japan, and Nina Cornyetz and Anne McKnight outside Japan have comprehensively discussed Nakagami's early essays and poems in terms of investigating how Nakagami represents the inner landscape of young violent youth. I refer readers to the work of these scholars. My discussion of Nakagami's early 'I-novel style' short story, 'Rakudo' (1976, Paradise), however, will add a new dimension to commentary on Nakagami's early works. Given the approach taken, I will not address the themes of the writer's mid-1980s and late 1980s works such as *Nichirin no tsubasa* (1984, *Wing of the Sun*), *Kiseki* (1989, *The Miracle*), *Sanka* (1990, *Paean*), and *Izoku* (Unfinished, *A Different Clan*). These four narratives, however, are insightfully analysed in detail by Kurata Yōko, Asano Urara, Anne Helene Thelle, Nina Cornyetz and Watanabe Naomi.¹²

Significance of the Thesis Contribution to Existing Nakagami Scholarship

My close reading of Nakagami's representation of the voice of the four sexually-stigmatised women discussed above is the key contribution of this thesis to existing Nakagami scholarship. Critiques of Nakagami's works as either complicit in or challenging the masculinist activities that result from patriarchal systems and phallogocentric ideologies essentially regard his narratives as a representation of the male voice. This approach runs the risk of considering the woman characters merely as objects to mirror the activities of Nakagami's males. This, I would argue, can be the case even with commentary on Oryū no oba, the most widely discussed woman

¹² See Kurata 2010, Asano 2014, Thelle 2010, Cornyetz 1999 and Watanabe 1994.

from the Nakagami corpus. While there is a sizeable body of scholarship around Oryū no oba, this work generally focuses on her role as the ‘data-bank’¹³ of the community rather than probing the subjectivity of the character herself. The work of Spivak on the ‘sexed subaltern subject,’ which is further explained in Chapter One, has been instrumental in permitting me to ‘hear’ the voices of these women whose significance can easily be elided by the power of the males in Nakagami’s texts. This is not to say that I overlook the male voice in Nakagami’s material. I read Nakagami’s early short story, ‘Rakudo’ and his best-known work called the ‘Akiyuki trilogy’ in order to explore the inner voice of the violent young man.

My research includes interpretation of a number of key texts from the Nakagami corpus not yet discussed in English language scholarship. For example, I offer an analysis of two fictional works, ‘Rakudo’ and *Keibetsu*, rarely referenced by critics outside Japan. This is in spite of the fact that consideration of these works is arguably essential for a full understanding of Nakagami’s project. I have also tried to give a profile to Nakagami’s own voice as heard in public lectures and conversations with both Japanese and non-Japanese writers. In this way, I have broadened the pool of material available for consideration by scholars interested in the writer’s work.

Existing Nakagami Scholarship

As noted, there is a body of Nakagami scholarship in both Japanese and English with an immense collection of commentary produced by highly influential Japanese male scholars who include Etō Jun (1932-1999), Hasumi, and Karatani. Although their analytic

¹³ Asada 1996, p. 29.

approaches differ, each interprets Nakagami's literature as the culmination of the development of the Japanese 'novel' (*shōsetsu*). Etō reads Nakagami's material as in the tradition of the masterpieces of the literary naturalist movement that depict the lived experience – real life – of the Japanese people.¹⁴ Hasumi, Karatani, Takazawa Shūji (Nakagami's biographer), and Yomota, the author of the best-known publication that focuses on Nakagami and his work, *Kishu to tensei: Nakagami Kenji* (1996, *Nobility and Reincarnation: Nakagami Kenji*), regard Nakagami's work as a challenge against the hegemony of the conventional system of narrative, *monogatari*. Taking a historical perspective towards Japanese literary studies, Watanabe Naomi interprets Nakagami's writing as a critique of modern Japanese literature and the manner in which representation in that mode continuously entrenches discrimination against Burakumin people. The approach of these scholars often draws on poststructuralism and its critique of the patterns, rules and ideologies that control language and representation in texts.¹⁵

In 1986 accompanied by Karatani and Asada, Nakagami travelled to France at the invitation of the symposium *Japon des Avant-gardes*. Here he engaged in dialogue with the eminent post-structuralist theorist, Jacques Derrida (1930-2004).¹⁶ After this event, many of Nakagami's major works were translated into French with the support of the French publisher Fayard, which also published French translations of the work of Gabriel García Márquez (1927-

¹⁴ Etō 1996, p. 144.

¹⁵ In a 1977 essay entitled 'Monogatari to shite no hō: Céline, Nakagami Kenji, Gotō Meisei' (Law as Narrative: Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Nakagami Kenji and Gotō Meisei), Hasumi appreciates Nakagami's narratives as unique *shōsetsu* (Japanese novel) to critically reveal the 'law' of narrative controlling the narrative depicted in the text. *Sakaguchi Ango to Nakagami Kenji*, (1996, *Sakaguchi Ango and Nakagami Kenji*) by Karatani includes a collection of essays on Nakagami's texts from a de Manian influenced deconstructionist perspective. In *Kishu to tensei Nakagami Kenji* Yomota examines Nakagami's narratives through articulating intertextuality with both Asian and Western narratives read in Nakagami's narratives. Watanabe's thesis *Nihon kindai bungaku to 'sabetsu'* (1994, *Modern Japanese Literature and 'Discrimination'*) demonstrates a reading of Nakagami's text as Burakumin narratives from the historical perspective of Japanese literary studies. *Hyōden Nakagami Kenji* (1998, *Critical Biography of Nakagami Kenji*) by Takazawa is the most detailed biography of Nakagami.

¹⁶ Nakagami and Derrida 1996, p. 10.

2014). Fayard was active in the campaign that resulted in García Márquez being awarded the 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature. According to Karatani, Fayard's support for Nakagami resulted from the publisher's belief that, more than any other writer, Nakagami had the potential to be a second García Márquez.¹⁷

In English translation, on the other hand, there are only two book publications of Nakagami's writing, both of which are collections of Nakagami's short stories.¹⁸ In-depth analysis of the writer's narrative, furthermore, began in English language scholarship only after the writer's 1992 death. Scholars such as Mark Morris, Mats Karlsson and Anne McKnight have explored the relationship between Nakagami's texts and the literature of William Faulkner (1897-1962). It was Faulkner's work that inspired Nakagami, as it did García Márquez, to revive the oral histories of the peripheral 'South' of his community as a means of contesting the official histories of the elite.¹⁹ Comparative study of Nakagami and Faulkner (and/or García Márquez) is an approach frequently seen in both Japanese and English scholarship.

A significant body of Nakagami scholarship addresses the representations of violence towards women that often feature in the writer's narratives. As Karlsson notes, Nakagami's disturbing depictions of this nature are 'the single most contentious feature' for

¹⁷ Karatani 2012c, p. 4.

¹⁸ These two books are *The Cape and Other Stories from the Japanese Ghetto* (translated by Eve Zimmerman) and *Snakelust* (translated by Andrew Rankin).

¹⁹ Morris' 1996 article entitled 'Gossip and History; Nakagami, Faulkner, Garcia Marquez' and McKnight's 1999 article 'Crypticism, or Nakagami Kenji's Transplanted Faulkner: Plants, Saga and Sabetsu' explore influence of literature of Faulkner on Nakagami's in terms of writing narratives of oppressed people in peripheral 'South' of the society. A recent publication by McKnight, *Nakagami, Japan: Buraku and the Writing of Ethnicity* (2011) includes examination of Nakagami's 1960s writing, the late 1980s text on Korea and subcultural works in collaboration with manga artists. McKnight examines these as works from view of Nakagami as a writer of 'high literature' and 'writing of ethnicity.' Karlsson's PhD dissertation entitled *The Kumano Saga of Nakagami Kenji* which is an analysis mainly focused on Nakagami's most acknowledged saga known as 'the Akiyuki trilogy' applies comparative study of Nakagami with Faulkner and also the theory of 'narratology' to investigate development of the writer's narrative style.

feminist and other academics in the West, ‘probably more so than in Japan.’²⁰ This is not to say that Nakagami’s work is dismissed out of hand by those scholars who question these representations. Like a number of critics both inside and outside Japan, Livia Monnet, for example, reads Nakagami’s writing as demonstrating a strong degree of misogyny and phallocentrism. She nonetheless concedes that these works effectively reveal the violent nature of the social structures that create masculinist perspectives. Monnet’s strongest critique, in fact, is reserved for the key Japanese male scholars, such as Karatani and Asada, whose efforts were largely responsible for canonising Nakagami,²¹ and who she regards as justifying the writer’s depiction of a ‘heroic-macho-violates-woman-as-nature’ discourse.²² The masculinist textual politics of prominent Japanese male critics is repeatedly criticised by scholars such as Nina Cornyetz, Eve Zimmerman and Anne Helen Thelle.²³ I will consider their concerns in greater detail in a textual analysis chapter of the thesis.

It is apparent from the above that reading Nakagami’s literature invokes an on-going discussion which demonstrates the Derridean critique of the ‘original’ text. According to Derrida, since the origin is only a ‘trace,’²⁴ the authority of any text is provisional.²⁵ To Derrida, linguistic meaning is an unstable phenomenon: at all times, and all places, ‘différance’ (difference and

²⁰ Karlsson 2014, p. 11.

²¹ See Monnet 1996a and 1996b.

²² Monnet 1996b, p. 234.

²³ Cornyetz adopts a psychoanalytic reading in her book of Nakagami and two writers Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939) and Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986) entitled *Dangerous Woman, Deadly Word: Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Three Japanese Writers* (1999). She includes chapters on Nakagami’s poems, short stories and the Akiyuki trilogy. Zimmerman, on the other hand, uses a biographical approach to display an interpretation of Nakagami’s Kumano narrative as a product of the writer’s life experience in a 2007 work, *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetics of Outcast Fiction*. Thelle’s *Negotiating Identity: Nakagami Kenji’s Kiseki and the Power of the Tale* (2010) focuses on Nakagami’s later narrative *Kiseki* (1989, *The Miracle*). Thelle criticises the *Kiseki* text’s nostalgia for the lost Burakumin homeland and concludes Nakagami as a writer who ‘remains trapped in the language and conventions of Japanese literature.’ See Thelle 2010, p. 217.

²⁴ Derrida 1974, p. 61.

²⁵ Spivak 1974, p. 19.

deferral) applies.²⁶ The ambivalent status of Nakagami's narrative confirms the fact that 'différance' always intrudes into literary representation thus preventing completeness of meaning.²⁷

Overview of the Structure of the Discussion

The thesis consists of six substantive chapters. While providing some discussion of Nakagami's work, Chapter One mainly sets forth a framework for considering the writer's narratives. Chapters Two to Six provide close readings of selected Nakagami texts. The underlying objective of all chapters is to discuss Nakagami's representation of the voice/s of subject/s oppressed by hegemonic mainstream norms or ideologies.

Chapter One sets out to clarify the thesis theme, 'the paradox of representing the silenced subaltern voice.' I have already noted that the principal theoretical element of my discussion is Spivak's argument around the (in)ability of the subaltern to speak. Having said that, I want to state clearly that I am not a postcolonial scholar and I do not aim to give a postcolonial reading of Nakagami's work. Rather, I am appropriating what I regard as a highly relevant aspect of Spivak's scholarship which I will argue creates possibilities for a new reading of Nakagami. There may be some postcolonial scholars who regard my analysis as inadequate in terms of the principles of their field of study. This, however, is to misunderstand my use of Spivak's ideas. While my thesis does not seek to situate Nakagami's material in a postcolonial literary context, I

²⁶ See Derrida 1982, p. 3-27 and Sim 2002, p. 5-6.

²⁷ Derrida 1974, p. 101-108.

do argue that applying aspects of Spivak's scholarship to Nakagami's texts helps us better understand this Japanese writer's literary objectives.

I am particularly interested in applying Spivak's geopolitical perspective, developed through her readings of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Antonio Gramsci, of representing the sexed subaltern voice from the South to Nakagami's perspective of *mukoku* (the silenced). The main Spivak texts that I will reference is her short 1985 essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' and her 1996 essay collection entitled *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Spivak is a writer (notoriously) known for her extremely complex language. As seen in Terry Eagleton's harsh critique of the 'obscurantism' of *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, her style of composition can be off-putting not only to non-specialist readers but also to academic readers, including Eagleton, who largely agree with Spivak's position.²⁸ In terms of using Spivak's work to inform my theoretical approach, I openly admit the difficulty of interpreting and decoding her writing which is constructed through an abundant knowledge of and deep insight into a wide range of theoretical fields and which endlessly poses new puzzles for me to consider. I would like, however, to put more stress on my impression of Spivak's writing as, to borrow Stephen Morton's lucid explanation, her challenge against 'the common-sense assumption that clear, transparent language is the best way to represent the oppressed.'²⁹ In other words, through refusing to adhere to the systematic conventions of western critical thought, her sometimes opaque writing acts itself as a critique of the power structures that are entrenched by 'rational' language. Like that of Spivak, Nakagami's writing was often the subject of criticism, in his case by Japanese literary specialists who claimed that his language did not follow

²⁸ Eagleton 1999, p. 3-6.

²⁹ Morton 2003, p. 5.

conventional Japanese grammar or idiomatic expression.³⁰ This matter is addressed in Chapter One.

In her essays, Spivak attempts to articulate the voices of silenced subalterns, voices that cannot be heard through representations based on hegemonic western theories or on models of political resistance and social reform. For Spivak, this is because western intellectuals cannot help but rely heavily on Kantian/Hegelian/Marxist perspectives of subjectivity and class-consciousness in their mode of representation (writing). As a result, they often ignore ‘geopolitical determinations’ in their construction of ‘the history of Europe as Subject’ and their narratives of the dominant North.³¹ These narratives ignore and thereby suppress non-Europe and the non-West, and close out the history of the subordinate South. The geopolitical context is a critical element of Nakagami’s narratives,³² which often depict the otherness of Kishū Kumano, a site viewed by the writer as Japan’s marginalised ‘South’ that exists in the shadow of the mainstream Japanese ‘North.’

Before arguing Spivak’s view, I will present background information about Kishū Kumano by referring to Nakagami’s essays, interviews, and travel journals of the area. I then examine Spivak’s critique of ideology, hegemony, the subaltern, and the role of intellectuals. Theorists I refer to in this discussion are Gramsci and the Palestinian commentator, Edward Said (1935-2003). Said developed his well-known theory of Orientalism largely from Gramsci’s geopolitical thought regarding the marginality of Southern Italy. Based particularly on Gramsci and Spivak’s ideas of the ‘intellectual,’ I investigate Nakagami’s own ambivalence about his role as a member of the silenced Burakumin community who is privileged as a ‘person who has

³⁰ Maruya 1989, p. 388-390.

³¹ Spivak 1985, p. 271.

³² See Nakagami’s comment in 1985 discussion with Murakami Haruki. Nakagami and Murakami 1985, p. 22-23.

(written) language.’³³ The challenges inherent in the act of representation will be investigated through reading Marx’s interpretation of this issue, in addition to the ideas of more contemporary theorists such as Spivak and Karatani. I close the chapter with an analysis of an example of Nakagami’s representation of the *mukoku* Kumano Burakumin’s voice from the 1978 travel journal *Kishū: ki no kuni ne no kuni monogatari* (*Kishū: A Tale of the Country of Trees, the Country of Root*).

Chapter Two opens with a discussion of transgressive young men, a discussion that supports my analysis of the violent young patriarch who is the protagonist of the 1976 short story, ‘Rakudo.’ ‘Rakudo’ can be seen as a fiction derived from an ‘I-novel’ (*watakushi shōsetsu*), the ‘flagship’ genre of Japanese novelistic Naturalism, a literary movement in which the private affairs and experiences of a protagonist often draw on the real-life experiences of the writer. This is not to say that the I-novel in any way provides a factual account of the writer’s life. On the contrary, as read in Tomi Suzuki’s *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (1996), the I-novel is, like all fiction, pure fabrication.³⁴ According to Suzuki, rather than being a literary genre, the I-novel was a Japanese ‘literary and ideological paradigm’ that was established between the mid-1920 and the 1960s. The I-novel, argued Suzuki, was a mode of reading of a narrative as a ‘direct’ representation of the writer’s ‘self.’³⁵ To emphasise the significance of this literary tradition in Nakagami’s development as a novelist, Chapter Two will reference one of modern Japan’s most prominent literary critics, Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983). I will also reference Karatani’s essay that discusses paradoxical I-novel characteristics and the confessional

³³ NKZ 14, p. 613.

³⁴ See Suzuki 1996.

³⁵ Suzuki 1996, p. 6.

system implicated in this genre. The I-novel is the ‘most traditional mainstream path’³⁶ of modern Japanese literature. Although ‘Rakudo’ helps readers understand how Nakagami’s literary trajectory developed from, while ultimately problematising, I-novel antecedents, this work has not yet been analysed in detail in either Japanese or English scholarship. Rather, because of its I-novel characteristics coupled with the extremely disturbing depiction of male violence, ‘Rakudo’ is sometimes cited, as in Takayama Fumihiko’s biographical essay on Nakagami, to demonstrate the writer’s actual commission of violence in his real life.³⁷

I will read ‘Rakudo’ as the tale of an ‘impotent patriarch’ (*fugainai kachō*), a motif that frequently appears in the I-novel genre.³⁸ In doing so, I will supplant Spivak’s framework with the gender critique of Mizuta Noriko who discusses what she refers to as the ‘discourse of man’ depicted in modern Japanese literature.³⁹ I will also refer to Spivak’s analysis of the husband and wife relationship seen in the Hindu practice of *sati* (a wife’s throwing herself onto her husband funeral pyre). I will conclude by considering the meaning of the silence of the wife, the objectified ‘mirror’ upon whom the man projects his interiority.

Chapter Three gives a close reading of Nakagami’s most well-known work, the Akiyuki trilogy: ‘Misaki’ (1976, *The Cape*), *Kareki nada* (1977, *The Sea of Withered Trees*), and *Chi no hate shijō no toki* (1983, *The End of the Earth, Supreme Time*). I will particularly focus on Nakagami’s depiction of the voice of a transgressive man who is oppressed by the fragmented relationships with his family and with his subaltern (Burakumin) community during the time of the dismantlement of the Kumano Burakumin homeland. Given that much existing scholarship

³⁶ Karlsson 2001, p. 11.

³⁷ Takayama 2008, p. 338-339.

³⁸ Ueno 2013, p. 129.

³⁹ Mizuta 1993, p. 76.

around the Akiyuki trilogy profiles the first two books in that work, I focus here on *Chi no hate*, the last novel in the set. My attention will be on the way in which, in this novel, Nakagami's own *monogatari* theory is put fully into practice to depict the voice of the Kasuga Burakumin. Unlike *Kishū*, 'Rakudo,' 'Misaki,' and *Kareki nada*, which appeared prior to the writer's announcement in the late 1970s of his relationship with the Burakumin community, *Chi no hate* was written following Nakagami's assuming responsibility, as the only recognised Burakumin novelist of the time, to depict the Burakumin voice. In this novel, Kasuga is clearly depicted as a Burakumin community in a manner not articulated in previous works. The dismantlement of the outcaste community in the name of urban planning and capitalist progress depicted in *Chi no hate* will be investigated by referring to the theories of community presented by Zygmunt Bauman (b. 1925). Thus, although this chapter provides an overview of 'Misaki' and *Kareki nada*, the focus of the textual analysis is on the way in which *Chi no hate* provides Nakagami's representation of the Burakumin voice by a writer who consciously chose to 'become' a Burakumin.

Since the protagonist, Akiyuki, is modelled to some extent on Nakagami's family and community experiences, the Akiyuki trilogy, like 'Rakudo,' is often regarded as an I-novel style narrative.⁴⁰ I will, however discuss the Akiyuki trilogy as Nakagami's unique writing practice that derived from overlaying the western influenced Naturalist I-novel mode with the more traditional Japanese narrative (*monogatari*) mode. In doing so, I examine Hasumi's interpretation of *Kareki nada* as a narrative that reveals the code of *monogatari*. As a narrative of the son's patricidal challenge against the father, I focus on the breaking of family taboos by the male protagonist, Akiyuki, including his incest with his half-sister and the fratricide of his half-brother. Akiyuki's transgressive acts will be interpreted as implying the cyclic repetition of a

⁴⁰ Kobayashi 2009, p. 110-112.

family tragedy set in the marginalised Kasuga community, the *roji* (alleyway) of Nakagami's narratives.

Chapter Four investigates the voice of the sister, Satoko, who has an incestuous relationship with her older half-brother, Akiyuki. There is considerable discussion in both Japanese and English scholarship of Akiyuki's breaking the incest taboo with his half-sister, Satoko, as a substitute for patricide. While a number of these commentaries reference Satoko, little attention has been given to her vulnerability or and her own response to the incest. My discussion will profile Satoko's subjectivity by considering her as a sister whose sexuality is exploited by the half-brother who then uses this as a strategic weapon in his bitter conflict with the father. This conflict, I argue, is actually the son's attempt to bond with the father. Drawing on Sedgwick's study of male 'homosociality,' I will discuss Satoko's subalternity as an object of dispute in her father and half-brother's homosocial bond. I also consider Satoko as, to borrow Spivak's term, 'the sexed subaltern subject' who has 'no space' to speak in modern patriarchal society.⁴¹

A key element of Chapter Four is the analysis of Nakagami's interpretation and, in turn, my re-interpretation of *Kyōdai shinjū* (*A Brother and Sister Double Suicide*), a folksong featured in the Akiyuki trilogy that implies the playing out of a mythic family tragedy in Kasuga. This ballad, which is drawn from the rich oral history of the Kasuga *roji*, narrates the incestuous relationship between a young woman and the brother who loves her. Drawing on the representation of 'sister' (*imo*) in the work of Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), the 'father' of folklorist studies in modern Japan, and also on the ideas of prominent feminist theorist, Judith Butler, I analyse the sister represented in the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad as an archetype of all 'sisters'

⁴¹ Spivak 1999, p. 307.

who are required to suppress their desire and sometimes give their lives in the name of the patriarchal state.

Chapter Five discusses Nakagami's representation of old women or *oba* from Kumano. In order to articulate the significance of the *oba* in Nakagami's narratives, I firstly investigate Nakagami's reading of the work of well-known woman author, Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986) to understand his view of the tradition of the 'old woman' (*omina*) as a story-teller of *monogatari*, narrative.⁴² Based on this discussion, I then examine Nakagami's depiction of the elderly woman known as Oryū no oba as a Burakumin *omina* in *Sen'nen no yuraku* (1982). Drawing on Spivak's theories discussed in Chapter One, I further discuss how Nakagami presents Oryū no oba's silenced voice.

Oryū no oba's status derives from her role as *omina* who passes down *monogatari* to the younger generation in the community. Yuki and Moyo, the two aged outcaste women who feature in the Akiyuki trilogy, however, are examined as *oba* who, unlike Oryū no oba, can never assume the voice of community story-teller. While Yuki is an aged eldest sister who once worked as a prostitute to support a father-less Burakumin family, Moyo is a single aged woman who became mute young after being raped by outcaste men. Moyo lived with a boy who was rumoured by the community to be the child born from the rape. I investigate how Nakagami depicts the impossibility of these sexed women's voices speaking to or being heard by the community. Interpreting the internationally celebrated play by Eve Ensler (b. 1953), *The Vagina Monologues* (premiered 1996), as an expression of a woman's voice of resistance against violence from the 'North,' I analyse Yuki's account of being a sexual object as her ineffective 'vagina monologue' from the subaltern 'South.' Both Yuki's powerlessness to voice herself and

⁴² NKZ 15, p. 242.

Moyo's muteness about the secret of the birth of her son are discussed as Nakagami's strategy to present an alternative representation of the sexed Burakumin voice.

Chapter Six discusses the voice of the young heroine in Nakagami's last published novel, *Keibetsu* (1992, *Scorn*). Nakagami's major narratives are primarily concerned with transgressive men and with women who are depicted as objects or reflections of the transgressive male gaze and the desire of hegemonic masculine society. In contrast to this, *Keibetsu* gives narrative agency to Machiko, the young woman protagonist who drifts between Tokyo, where she works as a stripper, and her lover's rural town, where she becomes the wife of an heir to a wealthy family. Unlike the many Nakagami narratives that feature characters who are closely associated with the Kumano/Kasuga community, *Keibetsu* never identifies the heroine's homeland. Her geopolitical subalternity is seen, however, in the fact that she works as a topless dancer in Kabuki-chō, Tokyo's largest and most notorious entertainment district.

I interpret *Keibetsu* as a narrative of the woman who challenges conventional gender norms through gazing back at the men (and also women) who regard her as a sexual object or deviant outside the mainstream community. Her life experience and consciousness are investigated through foregrounding the novel's 'contemporaneity' with television drama, the self-writing of a sex worker, 'self-help' books, and gender and sociological studies into women's desire published during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In this way, I will articulate *Keibetsu* as a novel in which Nakagami set himself the new and final challenge of depicting the voice of a woman who attempts to be a desiring subject.

The Historical Burakumin Context

Not all of Nakagami's works provide representations of Burakumin life, with the author having a strong interest in depicting the lives of the socially marginalised generally. Nevertheless, although his was a relatively privileged life as a post-war born Burakumin who received the financial and economic benefits of the democratic systems introduced at the time, Nakagami himself came from a Burakumin background. Since much of his writing draws on his own experiences and the experience of those in his Burakumin community, understanding the socio-historic experience of Burakumin people in the modern era is important in order to read Nakagami's texts. Although I do not adopt a *buraku mondai* (Burakumin issues) approach in this thesis, before embarking on my analysis of Nakagami's works I will briefly introduce key historical and socio-political aspects of the Burakumin experience. This includes an account of the twentieth-century emergence of the Burakumin emancipation movement and reference to a number of well-known 'Burakumin' narratives from modern Japanese literature written by non-Burakumin writers. I also explain a number of key terms used in reference to the experiences of Burakumin people.

The Burakumin are people who since the beginning of the modern era have been discriminated against because they are associated in the public imagination with the 'outcaste' groups of premodern Japan. They are a social group that, unlike other minority groups such as the Ainu or resident Koreans, are ethnically indistinguishable from the mainstream in Japan. The group was, nevertheless, historically discriminated against because their occupations and heredity were, and often still are, regarded as tainted by *kegare* (impurity).

Kegare is a term for a state of pollution and defilement that is important particularly as a concept in Shinto, Japan's indigenous religion. This concept of pollution was traditionally the reason for segregation of the Burakumin from mainstream society. Typical causes of *kegare* are contact with any form of death – either human or animal – childbirth, disease and menstruation. Subsidiary causes can include contact with soil or dirt. In *Kegare to ōharae* (2009, *Impurity and Purification*), Yamamoto Kōji extends this interpretation to argue that the essence of *kegare* includes taboo violations such as treason and subversion of the social order. According to Yamamoto, *kegare* can have an adverse impact not only on the person directly affected, but also on the community to which he or she belongs.⁴³ Yamamoto explains that *kegare* is a social concept that was established as an attempt to evade phenomena which disturb the social order and which therefore evoke instability and abhorrence.⁴⁴

Prior to the modern era, the Burakumin were pejoratively referred to as *eta* (great filth) or *hinin* (non-human) and forced to stay in segregated rural hamlets. Residents of the hamlets often engaged in occupations such as executioner, butcher, leather tanner, straw weaver and footwear maker. Each of these occupations has some association with the 'defiling' elements of death or soil.⁴⁵ Travelling entertainers and prostitutes were also regarded as ritually impure. The itinerant lifestyle of this group, known as *kawara mono* (riverside wanderers), was considered as morally reprehensible.⁴⁶ Criminals, rebellious tenant farmers and political exiles were also degraded as *hinin* and segregated in *buraku*.

⁴³ Yamamoto 2009, p. 15-73.

⁴⁴ Yamamoto 2009, p. 82. The internationally acclaimed film, *Okuribito*, (2008, *Departures* directed by Takita Yōjirō), for example, features a male protagonist whose wife and close friends are filled with disgust when they discover that he has taken work as a mortician. The film's narrative demonstrates how the sense of *kegare* is still deeply rooted in the psyche of many people, both non-Burakumin and Burakumin in contemporary Japan.

⁴⁵ See *Daijisen*, p. 291 and p. 2244. Also see Yokochi Samuel 2008, p. 181 and Price 1972, p. 6-30.

⁴⁶ Kawabata Yasunari's *Izu no odoriko* (1926, *The Izu Dancer*) is a good source to use in order to understand the

In the early years of the Meiji period (1862-1912), legislative initiatives, including the 1871 Emancipation Edict of *Eta* (*Eta kaihō rei*) and the 1872 abolishment of the feudal class system, saw the *eta* and *hinin* re-named *shinheimin* (new commoner). With the dramatic social changes of the era, many ordinary people experienced financial difficulties and, in seeking a scapegoat for their misfortunes, directed their anger and frustration at the *shinheimin*.⁴⁷ As a result, former *eta* and *hinin* became the target of brutal discriminatory practices, including *eta-gari* (eta hunts).⁴⁸ In his narrative ‘Ten’nin gosui’ (1981, The Decay of the Angel) Nakagami relates episodes of violence against Burakumin communities connected to the Emancipation Edict.⁴⁹ According to Takazawa, across Japan there were twenty-one cases of this form of aggression, referred to collectively as ‘riots against the Emancipation’ (*kaihō rei hantai ikki*).⁵⁰ In this context, the term *shinheimin* soon took on the same derogatory implication as the earlier terms, *eta* and *hinin*. Through some trial and error, the word ‘*burakumin*’ eventually came into general use in Japan in the late 1950s and was adopted for common use by the media and in academic circles in the 1970s.⁵¹

The historical context of discrimination against Burakumin can be read in the *Suiheisha sengen* (1922, *Declaration of the Levellers’ Society*), one of the first documents that demanded human rights and self-determination for Burakumin people. Although the full

social status of travelling entertainers.

⁴⁷ Although upper class samurai became part of the new aristocracy (*shizoku*) through the abolishment of the feudal class system, the majority of samurai joined peasants, artisans and merchants as commoners (*heimin*). For further details, see Tipton 2008, p. 44. The abolishment of the Tokugawa hereditary social hierarchy was also intended to abolish all special feudal rights so that a new system of land ownership could be established. For further details, see Totten and Wagatsuma 1972, p. 35 and Amos 2011, p. 43-44.

⁴⁸ Totten and Wagatsuma 1972, p. 35.

⁴⁹ NKZ 5, p. 103-104.

⁵⁰ Takazawa 1998, p. 147.

⁵¹ For further detail, see Teraki 1998.

Suiheisha sengen has been cited by many critics, such as McKnight and Yokochi Samuel,⁵² I would like to cite the electronic English translation of this historic text which is published on the webpage of the Buraku Liberation League (BLL) Tokyo.

Tokushu Burakumin [Residents of special hamlets] throughout the country: Unite!

Long-suffering brothers! Over the past half century, the movements on our behalf by so many people and in such varied ways have yielded no appreciable results. This failure is the punishment we have incurred for permitting ourselves as well as others to debase our own human dignity. Previous movements, though seemingly motivated by compassion, actually corrupted many of our brothers. Thus, it is imperative that we now organize a new collective movement to emancipate ourselves by promoting respect for human dignity.

Brothers! Our ancestors pursued and practiced freedom and equality. They were the victims of base, contemptible class policies and they were the manly martyrs of industry. As a reward for skinning animals, they were stripped of their own living flesh; in return for tearing out the hearts of animals, their own warm human hearts were ripped apart. They were even spat upon with ridicule. Yet, all through these cursed nightmares, their human pride ran deep in their blood. Now, the time has come when we human beings, pulsing with this blood, are soon to regain our divine dignity. The time has come for the victims to throw off their stigma. The time has come for the blessing of the martyrs' crown of thorns.

The time has come when we can be proud of being Eta.

We must never again shame our ancestors and profane humanity through servile words and cowardly deeds. We, who know just how cold human society can be, who know what it is to be pitied, do fervently seek and adore the warmth and light of human life from deep within our hearts.

Thus is the *Suiheisha* born.

Let there be warmth in human society, let there be light in all human beings.⁵³

An epoch-making point of the *Suiheisha sengen* is the critique of the Meiji Emancipation Edict as a 'failure' not just of the government but also of the Burakumin people themselves for

⁵² See McKnight 2011, p.45 and Yokochi Samuel 2008, p. 184.

⁵³ This is cited from the English translation of 'Suiheisha sengen' (Declaration of the Levellers' Society) from the webpage of the *Buraku Liberation League Tokyo*.

permitting the debasement of their own human dignity. Through asserting themselves in association with their specialised occupations, such as slaughtering animals, the very occupations which drew allegations of *kegare*, rather than affirming the official government line of ‘liberty’ and ‘equality,’ the declaration sought to affirm Burakumin otherness. The *Suiheisha sengen* adopts the position that humanistic ideologies such as ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ were merely strategies by means of which the ruling class sought to justify their sovereign power. According to Karatani, the emergence of the nation-state saw discrimination play a key role in the process of establishing a Japanese national ‘identity.’ Since this process was maintained (or reinforced) by excluding those who deviated from the mainstream, it resulted in the exclusion of the Burakumin.⁵⁴

Hinin narratives, literary representation of the lives of pre-modern and modern era outcaste people, are a feature of modern Japanese literary production. The early Meiji years saw the *gesaku* (playful narrative) publication of ‘Torioi Ōmatsu kajō shinwa’ (1877-1878, A New Story of The Travelling Singer Ōmatsu on the Seaway) by Kubota Hikosaku (1846-1898). This narrative depicts the beautiful outcaste *dokufu* (she-devil), Ōmatsu, who cheats men of their money. A male version of the Meiji *hinin* narrative is *Gosunkugi mukashi banashi* (1902, A Memoir of the Five-Inch-Nail Man) by Ihara Seiseien (1870-1941).⁵⁵ The *hinin* hero was modelled on the real-life criminal, Nishikawa Torakichi (1854-1941), who was a famous jail-breaker. The story title implies the protagonist’s ‘subhuman’ ability to bear the agony of having a large nail pierce his foot while attempting to flee the scene of a robbery. *Nokogiri-biki* (1897,

⁵⁴ Karatani also noted that this exclusion operated with respect to other groups such as Ainu. See Karatani’s comment in his round-table discussion with Asada Akira, Okuizumi Hikaru, and Watanabe Naomi, entitled ‘Sai/sabetsu, shoshite monogatari no seisei’ (Difference/Discrimination, and the Establishment of Narratives). Asada, Karatani, Okuizumi and Watanabe 2000, p. 256-257.

⁵⁵ Ihara Seiseien is also known as Ihara Toshio.

The Sawn-off Head) by Fujikage Onji (date of birth and death unknown), depicts atrocities alleged to have been committed by two of the Edo era's most powerful outcaste leaders, Danzaemon and Kuruma Zenshichi.⁵⁶ Each of these Meiji narratives gives a similar representation of outcaste people as 'lawless, violent, and defiling.' These texts were often serialised in the major daily newspapers of the time and both propagated and entrenched negative social stereotypes of outcaste people.⁵⁷

The Assimilation Policy for the Burakumin

In contemporary Japan, the areas which are the focus of status discrimination are called *hisabetsu buraku* (literally, discriminated community/hamlet). Like the word *burakumin*, the term *hisabetsu buraku* came into general use in Japan in the late 1950s and was adopted by the media and in academic circles in the 1970s. Today, the term *dōwa chiku* (assimilation area) is used interchangeably as a way of referring to *hisabetsu buraku*. More precisely, *dōwa chiku* refers to *hisabetsu buraku* which have been designated by administrative agencies as being areas to which *dōwa* policies are directed. The 1969 Law on Special Measures for Assimilation Projects (*Dōwa taisaku jigyō tokubetsu sochi hō*) set out a ten-year plan for improving the physical environment of *hisabetsu buraku*, increasing social welfare and public health support, and instituting educational programmes. After the completion of the 1969-1979 measures, the main *dōwa* assimilation projects were extended as a part of national policies until 2002. While these policies saw income levels and educational achievements show some improvement,

⁵⁶ The positions of the *eta-gashira* (the head of the *eta*) and the *hinin-gashira* (the head of the *hinin*) were hereditarily appointed by the Tokugawa Shogunate to the houses of Danzaemon and Kuruma Zenshichi respectively.

⁵⁷ See Yokochi Samuel 2008, p.186 and Watanabe 1994, Appendix 1.

averages still lagged behind those of non-Burakumin. During the period of Nakagami's literary production for example, the percentage of Burakumin receiving 'livelihood security support,' dropped from 76% in 1975 to 52% in 1993, but this remained almost twice as high as non-Burakumin in the same area.⁵⁸ Even after the completion of the main *dōwa* assimilation projects in 2002, the gap between non-Burakumin and Burakumin remained conspicuous.⁵⁹ Because of the government's reduction of funding for *dōwa* projects in recent years, furthermore, there has been decline in communal activities, such as after-school circles intended to supplement regular schooling and the organisation of meetings to discuss Burakumin issues and human rights, for Burakumin children and young people.⁶⁰

The idiosyncrasies of Nakagami's *hisabetsu buraku* birth-place, Kasuga, can be understood in this postwar socio-historical/socio-economic Burakumin context. By the early 1980s, Kasuga had been dismantled as one of the Special Measures for Assimilation Projects. This obliteration of the Burakumin homeland, which Nakagami saw as the 'tyrannical'⁶¹ exercise of power against the Burakumin community through the capitalist erasure of social difference and otherness, is one of the most important motives for the writer's production of Burakumin narratives. This thesis mainly discusses Nakagami's literary representation of the Kasuga community as one of a geopolitically marginalised Burakumin community metaphorically located in the wider hegemonic context of mainstream abhorrence towards, and exclusion of, difference.

⁵⁸ For further details see Tipton 2008, p. 211.

⁵⁹ Uchida Ryūshi's 2009-2010 survey of 851 young Burakumin people (age between 15 and 39) indicated that 19.6% did not complete high school education. Given the national average is 7.5%, levels of Burakumin educational achievement are still relatively low compared to the national average. See Uchida 2011, p. 73-74.

⁶⁰ See Uchida's study and interviews with young Burakumin activists entitled 'Buraku mondai to mukiau wakamono tachi' intermittingly published in the *Buraku kaihō* magazine from 2009 to 2011. Uchida 2009, p. 12-59, 2011a, p. 12-59 and p. 12-47.

⁶¹ NKZ 14, p. 678.

The Burakumin Issues (*Buraku Mondai*)

Today, the social issues related to discrimination against the Burakumin are collectively called *buraku mondai*. In twenty-first century Japan, in spite of the policies discussed above, the continuation of *buraku mondai* is evident from the fact that some mainstream Japanese continue to avoid contact with Burakumin for fear of *kegare*. While discrimination is diminishing in terms of employment, other social problems remain, including barriers to marriage between Burakumin and non-Burakumin.⁶²

Cases of continuing social discrimination are known to occur mainly in western Japan, particularly in the Kansai region which encompasses Kumano. As Takayama Fumihiko notes in his discussion of Kasumi, Nakagami's Tokyo-born writer wife who publishes under the name of Kiwa Kyō, people outside the Kansai area are often not aware of the issue.⁶³ The 1970s publication of the book called *Tokushu buraku chimei sōkan* (*A Comprehensive List of Buraku Area Names*), however, demonstrates the entrenched discrimination against the Burakumin in the Kansai area. This book was secretly edited and sold by a private detective agency cooperative to more than two hundred Japanese firms and thousands of individuals throughout Japan. The book included a nationwide list of the names and locations of *hisabetsu buraku* settlements.⁶⁴ Understandably, the Osaka branch of BLL protested vociferously against the book's publication.

⁶² In her autobiographical novel, *Tarō ga koi o suru koro made ni wa* (2008, *By the Time Tarō Falls in Love*), Kurihara Miwako (b. 1964) depicts the difficulty of a non-Burakumin woman whose family is opposed to her engagement to a Burakumin man because of their contempt for and fear of *kegare*.

⁶³ Takayama 2008, p. 216.

⁶⁴ Tomonaga 2005, p. 4-5. The notorious preface of *Tokushu buraku chimei sōkan* contained the following message: 'For personnel managers working on employment issues, and families worried by problems to do with the marriage of their children, these [Burakumin issues] are pretty burdensome. Hoping that we can help to solve these problems, we have decided to go against public opinion at this time and create this book.' Quoted in Tomonaga 2005, p. 4.

In 1985, however, *mimoto chōsa* (private investigation into one's background) was still being undertaken based on this book. As a result, the Osaka prefectural government introduced *An Ordinance to Regulate Personal Background Investigations Conducive to Buraku Discrimination*. In 2011, following the 2007 exposure of the habitual investigation by land developers to identify *hisabetsu buraku* precincts, the Ordinance powers were expanded to include the regulation of discriminatory investigations of land in addition to the activities of private investigators.⁶⁵

Renzoku tairyō sabetsu hagaki jiken (The Serial Discriminatory Postcards Incident), nevertheless, demonstrates that mainstream contempt for Burakumin is not limited to the Kansai region. From May 2003 until October 2004, over four hundred postcards and letters containing threatening and discriminatory language were anonymously sent to many people of Burakumin descent, including to the leaders of the BLL in Tokyo, Osaka, Hyōgo, Hiroshima, Kōchi and Fukuoka. Zainichi-Koreans and Hansen's disease sufferers also received these letters.⁶⁶ The culprit was an unemployed thirty-four-year-old man eventually sentenced to two years in prison. While the convicted man knew very little about the Burakumin, he had not been able to find a job. He testified in court that although he thought of himself as being superior, he remained unemployed. The implication was that the 'less qualified' Burakumin had taken away his job. Explaining that he had read a best-selling book series entitled, *Dōwa riken no shinsō* (*The Truth about Buraku Privileges*, five volumes published between 2002 and 2005) which accuses the

⁶⁵ See the news article entitled 'Tochi sabetsu chōsa o kisei: 10.1 Osaka fu de kaisei jōrei ga sekō' (Enforcement of the Regulation of the Discriminatory Investigation of Land: the Osaka prefectural government Introduces Revisions to the Ordinance to Regulate Personal Background Investigations) published in *Kaihō shinbun* (7 November 2011).

⁶⁶ In addition, the victims began receiving expensive cash-on-delivery items that had never been ordered. Other harassment included registering the victims on dating services, applying for membership of the Aum Shinrikyō cult, and contacting electrical and gas companies to have utilities cut off. For further details, see Uramoto 2011 and an online account of the incident at *Buraku Liberation League Tokyo*.

Burakumin of having received unfair social concessions, he said that he decided to harass Burakumin people in order to relieve his social frustrations.⁶⁷ This incident is evidence that, as was the case in the Meiji era with *eta-gari*, Burakumin people can easily become scapegoats for the frustration of non-Burakumin people who have financial or other social difficulties.

Nakagami's Criticism of the Literature of Burakumin Issues

Hakai (1906, *The Broken Commandment*) by Shimazaki Tōson (1872-1943) and *Seinen no wa* (1971, *A Circle of Youth*) by Noma Hiroshi (1915-1991) are the best known literary works by non-Burakumin writers that address discrimination against the Burakumin from a *buraku mondai* perspective. Unlike either Tōson or Noma, however, Nakagami avoids using terms such as *burakumin* or *shinheimin* when depicting the marginalised lives of Kasuga people. This is because Nakagami regards these terms, overtly related to Burakumin activities, as products of the discriminatory elements inherent in mainstream language. The fact that Nakagami did not use the term 'Burakumin' in his narratives demonstrates the writer's understanding of these terms as devised and regulated through the hegemonic power of the authorities. These authorities, for Nakagami, are not confined merely to government agencies but also include the politically active BLL, and some money-making Burakumin contractors who promoted the dismantlement of *hisabetsu buraku* that included Kasuga, his birth-place. To Nakagami, the use of mainstream Burakumin terms that appear in the narratives of writers such as Tōson and Noma was the exercise of the same kind of political power as that held by those who devised the post-war modernisation policies that led to the erasure of Burakumin communities.

⁶⁷ For further details, see Uramoto 2011 and an online account of the incident at *Buraku Liberation League Tokyo*.

In other words, Nakagami regarded narratives by non-Burakumin writers which engaged with Burakumin issues as strengthening the structure of the hegemonic centre and thereby further marginalising Burakumin society.

In my view, Nakagami did not intend his own Burakumin narratives to be read merely as Burakumin literature, but rather as a broader literature of the oppressed. This is one of the most important points to note for my analysis of Nakagami's literature. While earlier canonical works about Burakumin by non-Burakumin writers limited their themes to accounts of Burakumin issues, Nakagami wrote in order to represent the experiences of a wide range of society's Other, including – as noted – Burakumin, ethnic minorities, handicapped people, traumatised people, aged people and sex workers. Each of these are debased and silenced by the hegemonic mainstream. This intent signifies Nakagami's desire to assert and protect difference rather than to promote a questionable form of equality that inevitably resulted in assimilation into society and thus in the erasure or extermination of difference.

The Sayama Incident

Sayama jiken (The Sayama Incident), which involved the possible false accusation of a Burakumin man, is regarded as one of the most controversial post-war cases of discrimination against the Burakumin. This incident also demonstrates the sometimes destructive tensions that exist between the BLL and the Japanese Community Party (JCP). These two groups have been long-time rivals since disagreement arose between them over policies related to the Special

Measures for Assimilation Projects.⁶⁸ As McKnight notes, the Sayama Incident marked an important ‘turning point’⁶⁹ for the way in which Nakagami regarded the social structure of discrimination against the Burakumin.

In 1963, in the city of Sayama, Saitama Prefecture, twenty-four year old Ishikawa Kazuo (b. 1939) was arrested on charges of the rape, robbery, and murder of a local high school girl. Ishikawa belonged to a Burakumin community in Sayama. Following a conviction that relied heavily on the accused’s confession, Ishikawa received a sentence of life imprisonment. The convicted man insisted, however, that he had only made a false confession after being isolated and threatened by police. Proclaiming themselves as the main supporters of the accused, the BLL, in a statement that was one of a number that confirmed the deep political divisions that separated the BLL and the JCP, were highly critical of Ishikawa’s lawyer who was a JCP supporter.⁷⁰ In 1977 the Supreme Court turned down Ishikawa’s appeal without hearing the case. Ishikawa then served thirty-two years in prison maintaining his innocence the entire time. He was released on parole in 1994. Ishikawa, along with his wife and supporters, continues to seek a retrial to exonerate his wrongful conviction.⁷¹

In a 1977 exchange between Nakagami and the established novelists, Noma Hiroshi and Yasuoka Shōtarō (1920-2013), published in *Asahi Journal* and entitled ‘Shimin ni hisomu sabetsu shinri’ (The Discriminatory Psychology Hidden in the Psyche of the Japanese People), Nakagami explained his view of the Sayama Incident.

⁶⁸ Tipton 2008, p. 186.

⁶⁹ McKnight 2011, p. 72.

⁷⁰ Tainaka 1977, p. 2-3. For further detail see Tainaka Ichirō’s 1977 article in the JCP’s newspaper, *Akahata Shinbun*, entitled “‘Kōsei saiban yōkyū’ to itteiru ga, “kaidō” no “Sayama tōsō” no hatan to gaiaku’ (Although Claiming of the Fair Trial...The Collapse and Evil of the BLL in the Sayama Protest).

⁷¹ For further detail about the Sayama Incident, see Kim Sungwoong’s 2013 documentary film about Ishikawa Kazuo, entitled *Sayama: Mienai tejō o hazusu made* (*The Sayama Incident: Until the Invisible Handcuffs are Removed*).

The reality of the rape and murder of the girl [...] in Sayama demonstrated the terror felt by the settled [non-Burakumin] residents of the area at the thought that their [community] myth about [the sanctity of] sex might be violated and I would say that's why these people were convinced that [a Burakumin person] must have been the criminal.⁷²

This passage demonstrates Nakagami's view of discriminatory social structures. For Nakagami, the conviction of a young Burakumin man in the Sayama Incident resulted from a 'frame-up',⁷³ that followed as the consequence of the panic that gripped non-Burakumin residents who were terrified by the vicious rape/murder that took place in their small community and which violently disturbed the peace of a quiet area of rural Japan. The enigmatic murder invoked the non-Burakumin people's latent abhorrence of the unconventionality or the otherness of Burakumin residents, and instantly made these people believe, without any concrete evidence, that the young Burakumin man must be the offender.

In his later essays, Nakagami sees discrimination as a 'narrative' established through particular elements such as 'sex, violence, and religion.'⁷⁴ The last element, religion, includes both formal religious practices in addition to widely held beliefs or myths which have currency in certain communities. For Nakagami, the Sayama Incident was a typical case that demonstrated discrimination as narrative and that profiled the three elements above – 'sex, violence and religion.' Rather than drawing attention to discriminatory practices that might be labelled 'Burakumin issues,' Nakagami draws upon this triad as illustrative of the manner in which hegemonic ideologies construct discrimination against the Burakumin. Accordingly, the textual analysis chapters will give close attention to the frequent depiction of sex, violence, and religion in Nakagami's narratives of the lives of people who are socially oppressed.

⁷² Nakagami, Noma and Yasuoka 1999, p. 17.

⁷³ Nakagami, Noma and Yasuoka 1999, p. 17.

⁷⁴ NKZ 15, p. 167.

The First Child Born from the Encounter of Burakumin and Letters

In a 1983 essay, Nakagami explains himself as ‘the first child born from the encounter of Burakumin and letters.’⁷⁵ Even after the 1871 Emancipation Edict and later campaigns by Burakumin activist societies, which resulted in the 1922 Declaration by *Suiheisha*, poverty continued to prevent many Burakumin children attending school.⁷⁶ According to Nakagami, the idea of compulsory education only became a reality for Burakumin communities after the end of the Second World War.⁷⁷ Thus, while his older half-brothers and half-sisters were denied such an opportunity, Nakagami – who was born in 1946 – received the benefits of literacy from the new post-war democratic education system. In a 1991 interview with Karatani, Nakagami explains himself as a ‘*bungaku shōnen*’ (boy who loved reading). This is in spite of the fact that his family had no books. To compensate for this lack, Nakagami borrowed material from his classmates, school libraries and from the book collection of ‘*kodomo kai*,’ an afterschool children’s circle that operated in his *hisabetsu buraku*.⁷⁸

In 1965, the eighteen-year-old Nakagami left for Tokyo to take the entry exam for the prestigious Waseda University. 1965 was the year after the Tokyo Olympic Games, an event which, as Iida explains, saw Japan project ‘an image of confidence as the newest member of the world’s leading industrial nations.’⁷⁹ Following the high speed economic growth enjoyed by Japan during the previous decade, there was an expansion of publicly funded projects such as the urbanisation of rural areas, including Nakagami’s hometown of Shingū and its surrounds. In this

⁷⁵ NKZ 15, p. 306.

⁷⁶ NKZ 15, p. 306.

⁷⁷ NKZ 15, p. 306. Also see Takazawa 1998, p. 6-7.

⁷⁸ Nakagami and Karatani 1997, p. 328.

⁷⁹ Iida 2002, p. 119.

process Nakagami's stepfather became a successful builder who, although from a *hisabetsu buraku* community, had the financial means to aspire to send his wife's son to an elite private university. Nakagami, however, never enrolled in university but remained in Tokyo as a *yobikō sei* (student of a school that prepares candidates for university entrance exams).⁸⁰ He soon, however, stopped attending even preparatory school and spent most of his time instead listening to jazz, taking drugs, reading books and writing poems.⁸¹

In 1965 Nakagami also became involved in writing for, and from 1967 to 1970, editing the literary magazine *Bungei shuto* (*Literary Metropolis*). This coterie journal was where Nakagami served his apprenticeship as a writer. At the time, Tsushima Yūko (b. 1947) and Kiwa Kyō (b. 1945), whom Nakagami married in 1970, were also regular contributors to the journal.⁸² In addition to this literary activity, from November 1967 the twenty-two-year-old Nakagami began to participate in the violent New Left protests known in Japanese as *gebaruto* (from the German *gewalt*, employment of force) that were occurring with increasing frequency on the streets of Tokyo. Thus, in late 1960s Tokyo, Nakagami took advantage of the financial support given by his successful stepfather to live like a hippy, or to use the Japanese word, *fūten*.⁸³ His 1968 short story entitled 'Nihongo ni tsuite,' (Of the Japanese Language) depicts a young *fūten* who is hired by a group of anti-Vietnam war activists to look after an African American soldier for five days. This work was short-listed for the 1968 *Gunzō shinjin bungaku shō* (Gunzō Literary Award for New Writers) and was runner-up for the 1969 *Sakka shō* (a literary award

⁸⁰ In a 1991 interview with Karatani, Nakagami mentioned that he never sat the entry exam for any university. See Nakagami and Karatani 1997, p. 316.

⁸¹ Information about Nakagami's life in Tokyo and Nakagami's stepfather's benefit from the urbanisation of Shingū given in this paragraph is mainly based on Takazawa Shūji's *Hyōden: Nakagami Kenji* (1998, *Critical Biography of Nakagami Kenji*) and *Nakagami Kenji jiten* (2002, *A Dictionary of Nakagami Kenji*). See Takazawa 1998 and 2002.

⁸² Karlsson 2001, p. 11.

⁸³ Takazawa 1998, p. 9-15.

organised by the coterie magazine *Sakka*, ‘Writers’). In spite of being praised for its ‘freshness’ of language,⁸⁴ ‘Nihongo ni tsuite’ was also criticised as a work written by one of the many epigones of Ōe Kenzaburō. This is because the characters in the novella, including the young male protagonist and the African American soldier, are similar to those in Ōe’s Akutagawa-prize-winning short story, ‘Shiiku’ (1957, Prize Stock). Certainly, Nakagami had been subject to the influence of Ōe, the most radical writer in Japan at the time, whose ideas had strong appeal for 1960s literary youth. Yet as Minakami Tsutomu (1919-2004) suggested in a 1979 conversation with Nakagami, entitled ‘Fūdo to shutsuji no uta’ (A Song of a Place of Birth and its Climate), the late 1960s was an experimental era for Nakagami during which time the young writer from Shingū struggled to establish his own literary identity by striving to overcome the influence of Ōe.⁸⁵

In 1958 – a decade before the New Left *gebaruto* protest movement – Nakagami’s eldest half-brother, Ikuhei, hanged himself at the age of twenty-four. Nakagami was twelve at the time and living with his mother who had taken her youngest son and daughters to make a new family with a man from a neighbouring town. Ikuhei remained behind in Kasuga.⁸⁶ As depicted in Nakagami’s 1982 autobiographical essay entitled ‘Karasu’ (Crow), a few years before his death, Ikuhei became an aggressive alcoholic and the schoolboy Nakagami and his mother were often targets of the drunken elder brother’s violent behaviour.⁸⁷ In an autobiographical 1969 essay entitled ‘Hanzaisha sengen oyobi waga bokei ichizoku’ (Declaration of a Transgressor and my Matrilineal Family), Nakagami notes that his mother bore a total of six children to two

⁸⁴ Quoted in Takayama 2007, p. 139. This was an excerpt from a comment on ‘Nihongo ni tsuite’ made by Noma Hiroshi who was one of members of the selection committee of the award, in *Gunzō* (June 1968).

⁸⁵ Nakagami and Minakami 1980, p. 174. Takayama Fumihiko also notes that a writer whom Minakami Tsutomu implied in this conversation is Ōe. See Takayama 2007, p. 140-141.

⁸⁶ Nakagami’s family background information given here is also based on Takazawa’s *Hyōden: Nakagami Kenji* (1998, *Critical Biography of Nakagami Kenji*) and *Nakagami Kenji jiten*. See Takazawa 1998 and 2002.

⁸⁷ NKZ 5, p. 429.

different men (including Nakagami's biological father) and then married a man (Nakagami's stepfather) with a son.⁸⁸ Takazawa explains the writer's *jōkyō* (leaving for Tokyo) as an attempt to escape from his homeland with its complicated family background, including the pall created by his brother's death.⁸⁹ While Nakagami could escape physically, psychological escape was much more difficult.

The 1969 short story entitled 'Ichiban hajime no dekgoto' (The First Event)⁹⁰ depicts the life of a young boy apparently based to some extent on the writer's own boyhood. Although at the time of publication it did not particularly attract notice in the *bundan* (Japanese literary community), 'Ichiban hajime no dekgoto' was reevaluated by Hasumi in his 1978 essay collection entitled *Shōsetsu ron = hihyō ron* (*Theory of the Novel = Theory of Critique*). Here, Hasumi argues that as early as this work, Nakagami's writing featured the 'absolute cruelty' of narrative that became a distinct feature of his later work.⁹¹ Hasumi pointed out that unlike most novelists who first produce a *bildungsroman* narrative which focuses on the protagonist's process of winning his/her self-identity, Nakagami was 'the first writer' whose aim from the start was to represent the violent nature of narrative itself. Nakagami's work, noted Hasumi, could therefore be read as a critique of narrative.⁹² As I note in further detail in a later chapter, this reading has been accepted since 1979 by both the *bundan* and academics as the most 'decisive'⁹³ evaluation of Nakagami as a new champion of contemporary Japanese literature.

⁸⁸ NKZ 14, p. 137-138.

⁸⁹ See Takazawa 1998 and 2002.

⁹⁰ 'Ichiban hajime no dekgoto' was Nakagami's first work published in a major literary magazine, *Bungei*.

⁹¹ Hasumi 1984, p. 173.

⁹² Hasumi 1984, p. 171-182.

⁹³ Nagashima 1996, p. 301.

Following his 1970 marriage, Nakagami cut his connection with New Left activism and his hippy-like lifestyle. While he worked hard in various places as a manual labourer to support his new family, Nakagami enthusiastically wrote a series of short stories about the interiority and transgressive acts of gloomy young men who were often represented as *yobikō sei* with a similar *jōkyō* experience as the writer's own. While Nakagami's early 1970s narratives such as 'Hai'iro no koka kōra' (1972, Greyish Coca-Cola) and 'Jūkyūsai no chizu' (1973, Map of A Nineteen-Year-Old) are first person narratives set in Tokyo, works written after the mid-1970s such as 'Shugen' (1974, Holy Man) and 'Jain' (1975, Snakelust) are third person narratives with settings that Nakagami referred to as the '*roji*,' sites that often hover between urban areas and their peripheries. This term *roji* articulates the site of Nakagami's subaltern narratives which are underlain by the geopolitical objective of 'writing back to the centre.'⁹⁴ As will be further discussed in a later textual analysis chapter, his Akiyuki trilogy depicts the Kishū Kumano *roji* as the narrative site of a transgressive young man. Before undertaking this analysis, I will explain the key theoretical positions that support my investigation of Nakagami's texts.

⁹⁴ Ishikawa 2011, p. 1. For further discussion see my 2011 essay entitled 'Nakagami Kenji's "Writing Back to the Centre" through the Subaltern Narrative: Reading the Hidden Outcast Voice in "Misaki" and Kareki nada.' Borrowing the post-colonial concept of 'writing back' to the hegemonic centre from the work of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) my article analyses Nakagami's 'Misaki' (1976, The Cape), and its sequel, *Kareki nada* (1977, *The Sea of Withered Trees*). Drawing on a statement by Salman Rushdie (b. 1947), a writer whom Nakagami regarded as a peer, to the effect that 'the Empire writes back to the Centre,' Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue that 'writing back' is the way in which postcolonial – that is, subaltern – writers and texts respond to and engage with mainstream literature. Also see Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, p. 2. Concerning Nakagami's statement about Rushdie, see Nakagami and Subraminian 1993, p. 215. (Note that the name should be Subramanian. Nakagami, however, spells this surname as 'Subraminian' in English in his text.)

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework: Paradox of the Representation

Nakagami's Geopolitical Perspective of Kishū Kumano

The theme of this thesis is the paradox of representing the silenced voice. The first substantive chapter will conduct a detailed discussion of the applicability of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critique of representing the voice of the silenced subject to Nakagami's perspective of *mukoku* (also meaning the silenced or voiceless). Focussing on the geopolitical perspective of Nakagami's writing, which is an important element in the work of scholars such as Spivak and Edward W. Said (1935-2003), I will argue that, like Spivak and Said, Nakagami also attempted to represent the silenced voice of Japanese society's 'Other.'

Knowledge of Kishū Kumano⁹⁵ is essential to an interpretation of Nakagami's narratives because an understanding of the relevance of this location is critical to interpreting the oppressed status of the writer's characters. Nakagami's narratives depict the otherness of Kishū Kumano, long regarded as *komoriku*, a hidden country, on the periphery of Japan. In his 1978 travel journal, *Kishū: ki no kuni, ne no kuni monogatari* (*Kishū: A Tale of the Country of Trees, the Country of Roots*, hereafter *Kishū*), Nakagami portrays this region as 'the nation of darkness' where the 'losers' have settled.⁹⁶ The term 'losers' implies those, including ancient exiled nobles, rebellious farmers and modern anarchists and socialists, who incurred social stigma (*kegare* in

⁹⁵ The expression Kishū Kumano refers the Kumano region of the Kii Peninsula. This region is often simply called as Kumano. In the thesis, unless specifically wishing to invoke some use of the term Kishū by Nakagami, I will generally refer to this area as Kumano.

⁹⁶ NKZ 14, p. 676.

Yamamoto's sense) through defeat or social marginalisation.⁹⁷ The expression, 'the nation of darkness,' suggests Nakagami's view of Kishū Kumano as a historical site that was geographically situated as the inverse of the ancient capital, Kyoto, where the emperor, who is the symbol of *hare*, purity or glory, once lived.⁹⁸ In other words, this nation of darkness is juxtaposed against the centre of Japan, the political entity that operated under the brilliant auspices of the sun goddess. Traditionally renowned as a spiritual spot for healing fatal diseases such as leprosy, Kumano was also known, since ancient times, as a place for salvation. Pilgrims, regardless of rank, sex or place of residence, came to the three shrines of Shingū, Hongū and Nachi, collectively known as *Kumano Sanzan*. It was thus depicted paradoxically in folklore and myth as a sacred yet ominous realm of death, but also as a place of revival, that was inhabited by the marginalised and ostracised.⁹⁹ As a realm of death, it was *kegare*, polluted.

I have noted Yamamoto's view of *kegare* (impurity) as including social dissent. In modern Kishū Kumano, this social dissent was most clearly evident in the so-called High Treason Incident (1910/1 *Taigyaku jiken*), which saw the conviction of six defendants from Shingū, the city in which the Kasuga *buraku* was situated, and the execution of two of the group. Regarded by authorities as the leader of the so-called 'Shingū Group,' Ōishi Seinosuke (1867-1911), who was executed on 25 January 1911, was a local doctor and sometime physician to iconic anarcho-socialist Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911). The High Treason Incident made a strong impression upon Nakagami and is a theme that repeatedly erupts to the surface of his fictional narratives. The 1977 essay entitled, 'Watashi no naka no Nihonjin – Ōishi Seinosuke' (1977, A Japanese Man on my Mind – Ōishi Seinosuke), for example, gives Nakagami's response to the

⁹⁷ NKZ 14, p. 676 and Yamamoto 2009, p. 15-73.

⁹⁸ NKZ 15, p. 63.

⁹⁹ Nakagami and Tomioka 1999, p. 233-234. Also see Karlsson 2001, p. 2-4 and Cornyetz 1999, p. 170-171.

High Treason Incident and the brutality of the sentences visited upon Ōishi and other members of the Shingū group. This short work confirms Nakagami's view of Kishū Kumano as a place that was historically 'consigned to the cold' by the political centre.¹⁰⁰ The extract from this essay given below commences with reference to the *Kojiki* (*A Record of Ancient Matters*), the text compiled in 712 to justify the imperial authority of the time.¹⁰¹ The event referred to in the opening line, the *Tōsei* or defeat of the area by the mythical Emperor Jimmu, was invoked repeatedly by Nakagami as a metonym for the subjugation of the local area by the centre:

Kumano was the place to which the Emperor Jimmu came for *Tōsei* [the conquest of the East] and where, according to the *Kojiki*, 'a large bear [could be seen] faintly moving around; then it disappeared. Then Kamu-Yamatō-Ipare-Bikō-Nō-Mikōtō [the Emperor Jimmu] suddenly felt faint; his troops also felt faint and lay down.'¹⁰² Kishū Kumano is always in darkness. Although situated close to the culture of the Kinki area, it is under the shadow of the Yamato Court. Throughout the Edo period, into the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and even after the Meiji Restoration, the Kishū clan could not find their way into the halls of power. While it might sound exaggerated, Kumano has always been consigned to the cold despite being featured in Japanese history since the time of ancient myth.¹⁰³

Donald L. Philippi, the English translator of the *Kojiki*, notes that the reference here to a 'large bear' (*kuma*) signifies the unruly Kumano mountain deities who initially transformed themselves into the form of a bear that cast a spell over the Emperor Jimmu and his men. However, Jimmu was revived by a magical sword, whereupon the Kumano deities were 'magically quelled.'¹⁰⁴ In the *Kojiki*, the derogatory attitude of the centre towards the people of Kumano is evident by the

¹⁰⁰ NKZ 14, p. 367.

¹⁰¹ The narrative of *Jimmu tōsei* is also written in *Nihon shoki* (720, *The Chronicle of Japan*). In this thesis, however, I focus on the *Kojiki* narrative which Nakagami cited in his essay, 'Watashi no naka no Nihonjin – Ōishi Seinosuke.'

¹⁰² Descriptions in parentheses are my annotations in this citation. I cited Philippi's translation of the *Kojiki*, retaining Philippi's macrons. See *Kojiki*, p. 167.

¹⁰³ NKZ 14, p. 367.

¹⁰⁴ This part is written in *Kojiki* as follows: 'At the very time that he (Jimmu) received that sword, all of the unruly deities in the KUMANO [sic] mountains were of themselves cut down.' Philippi notes in an annotation that 'the magic power of the heavenly sword was in itself sufficient to vanquish immediately all the unruly deities.' See *Kojiki*, p. 167.

fact that the latter are depicted as ‘men with tails.’ Philippi cites commentary suggesting that the early Japanese believed that indigenous people who lived in the mountains, given their ‘primitive’ stage of cultural development, were animal-like and were therefore referred to as having tails.¹⁰⁵

Noting that the Kii Peninsula, on which Kumano with its animal-like inhabitants is located, is ‘a peninsula of darkness,’ Nakagami goes on to observe that it was ‘no mystery’¹⁰⁶ that Kishū Kumano was the home of various groups that had rebelled against authority. Nakagami gives details of the derogatory assumptions made by those that conquered the people who fled to and were exiled or executed in Kumano. This included those defeated in the *Saika ikki* (1577-1585, The Saika Riot), an uprising in Saika against Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), the brutal sixteenth-century warlord who initiated political unification in early modern Japan. The leader of this uprising was the son of the lord of Saika Castle, Suzuki Magoichi (circa 16th century – the year of birth and death uncertain), whose followers, armed with guns were one of the most highly skilled and technologically advanced military units of the time.¹⁰⁷ Ryūzō, the father of the eponymous protagonist of the Akiyuki trilogy, is depicted through intertextuality with the legend of Magoichi to emphasise his resentment towards authority. Further discussion of the use of this legend is provided in Chapter Three.

Nakagami regards each of the matters referred to above – the *Taigyaku jiken*, the *Jimmu tōsei*, and the *Saika ikki* – as representative of the culture of political defeat that has marked the people of Kishū Kumano since ancient times.¹⁰⁸ Nakagami notes that even in the modern era, an event such as the High Treason Incident was ‘inevitable’ because Kishū Kumano

¹⁰⁵ See Philippi’s commentary in *Kojiki*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁶ NKZ 14, p. 367.

¹⁰⁷ *Daijisen* p. 1033 and Teraki 1991, p. 66-67.

¹⁰⁸ NKZ 14, p. 367.

people had an innate tendency to rebel against authority.¹⁰⁹ The history of Kumano given here confirms the status of the area as *komoriku*, hidden country.

Nakagami's representation of Kishū Kumano as a 'nation of darkness' resonates with the etymology of the term, Kumano, meaning both 'field of bears' (熊野) and 'the edge of a field' (隈野). In a 1985 interview with Jacques Derrida, Nakagami explained the paradox of the Kumano toponym.

Kumano is a strange place. Kumano means the edge of the field. [...] In a word, the edge means a place in which there is no land, or the margin of something. [...] We can probably define Kumano as a place which exists nowhere, or as a place which exists even though it is invisible. So, it is a land, a place of paradox; Kumano is this sort of paradoxical land. That is to say, [...] Kumano is a place in which inside and outside stick together, a place that is at once inside and outside. It is a place that eternally circulates, and since there are no breaks or divisions, it is a place that exists as a borderless zone.¹¹⁰

In response to the statement cited above, Derrida suggests that Nakagami's perspective when writing of Kumano is 'not an ideological, philosophical or political justification of literature from the periphery,' rather it is a critique of the very concept of peripherality.¹¹¹ Peripherality, as Derrida defines that concept in this interview, is something that presumes the binary structure of centre/periphery. For the French thinker, the practice of 'deconstruction,' while acknowledging the necessity of periphery, at the same time seeks to critique the hierarchical nature of binary structures. Informed by this perspective, Derrida views Nakagami as a writer who, although on the edge of periphery, nonetheless rejects peripherality as an ideology and tries to 'shake' the binary opposites, which have already been 'invalidated,' from both inside and outside.¹¹² A critique of binary opposites is acknowledged as one of the most important aspects of the work of

¹⁰⁹ NKZ 14, p. 367.

¹¹⁰ Nakagami and Derrida 1996, p. 13.

¹¹¹ Nakagami and Derrida 1996, p. 18-19.

¹¹² Nakagami and Derrida 1996, p. 18-19.

Derrida and also of Spivak, who translated Derrida's *De La Grammatologie* (1967, translated as *Of Grammatology* in 1976). It is also, I argue, a crucial element of Nakagami's writing. I will return to discuss this aspect in a later section of the chapter.

Nakagami's unique interpretation of periphery is demonstrated in his view of Kumano as 'Japan's South.' His view recalls the ideas of William Faulkner regarding the 'curse' of the American South. According to Faulkner, this curse is 'slavery, which is an intolerable condition – no man shall be enslaved – and the South has got to work that curse out [...].'¹¹³ As Nakagami noted in his 1985 lecture entitled 'Faulkner, hanmo suru minami' (Faulkner, The Luxuriant South), it was Faulkner's literature that largely influenced him to write of Kumano as a geopolitically marginalised South.¹¹⁴ My interest in this thesis is in Nakagami's literary representation of the silenced people in the Japanese version of the 'cursed' southern community. In the main textual analysis section of the thesis, Nakagami's narratives will be examined, borrowing Faulkner's words, as a practice that can 'work out' the 'intolerable condition' or 'the curse' visited on the marginalised people of Kumano, the Japanese South. Although there is no slavery in Kumano, the area was 'cursed' by social conditions that demeaned and dehumanised *hisabetsu buraku* residents in a manner that might be seen as similar to slavery in its dehumanising aspects.

Ideology, Hegemony and Subaltern: Gramsci's Geopolitical Perspective of the South

¹¹³ Faulkner 2003, p. 287.

¹¹⁴ NKZ 15, p. 542-543.

In any discussion of geopolitics, Antonio Gramsci is a key scholar to reference. Theorists such as Spivak and Said developed their postcolonial perspective of the world from elements of Gramsci's work, including his conceptualisation of 'hegemony,' his history of the 'subaltern' class and his trenchant critique of 'the role of intellectuals.' As Kang Okcho notes, these key aspects emerged through Gramsci's attempt to understand how his homeland, Sardinia, had been stigmatised as the 'backward'¹¹⁵ south of Italy.¹¹⁶ I will firstly examine Gramsci's perspective of the South and his observations on ideology, hegemony, and subaltern. Secondly I will consider the theoretical appropriation of Gramsci's ideas by influential postcolonial theorists such as Spivak, Said, and a leading scholar of the Subaltern Studies group, Ranajit Guha (b. 1922). Both Gramsci's geopolitical perspective and the interpretation of his work by these theorists are important here because the textual analysis chapters of the thesis will explore Nakagami's representation of the 'voice' of Kumano Burakumin and the significance of the geopolitical in Nakagami's representation of that voice.

Gramsci is remembered as a founding member and leader of the Communist Party of Italy. Imprisoned between 1926 and 1937, Gramsci died at the age of forty-six, a month after his release. Gramsci's radical involvement in communism was rooted in his own questioning of why southern Italy was considered 'backward' in relation to the more affluent north. His 1926 unfinished essay, 'Some Aspects of the Southern Question,' demonstrates his geopolitical observations of southern Italy. In this essay, Gramsci argues as follows:

It is well known what kind of ideology has been disseminated in myriad ways among the masses in the North by the propagandists of the bourgeoisie: the South is the ball and chain which prevents the social development of Italy from progressing more rapidly; the

¹¹⁵ *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, p. 173.

¹¹⁶ Kang 1999, p. 129.

Southerners are biologically inferior beings, semi-barbarians or total barbarians, by natural destiny; if the South is backward, the fault does not lie with the capitalist system or with any other historical cause, but with Nature, which has made the Southerners lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric [...]. The Socialist Party was to a great extent the vehicle for this bourgeois ideology within the Northern proletariat. The Socialist Party gave its blessing to all the 'Southernist' literature of the clique of writers who made up the so-called positivist school [...]¹¹⁷

The stereotypical expressions such as 'lazy, incapable, criminal and barbaric' directed towards Southern Italy as cited above were reiterated through 'a variety of forms such as articles, tales, short stories, novels, impressions and memoirs' produced by intellectuals and scientifically authorised as the 'Nature' of the Southerners. (We might immediately draw a parallel between these materials and the popular narratives about Burakumin people discussed in the Introduction). Moreover, 'Southernist' literature was claimed to be 'the science of the proletariat' by mainstream Northern members of the Socialist Party of Italy. Gramsci criticised this socialist penchant for 'science' as bourgeois propaganda that fostered oppression against the 'wretched and exploited' Southerners.¹¹⁸

'Some Aspects of the Southern Question' also demonstrates how Gramsci considers ideology and its power over society. In *The German Ideology* (1845-1846), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) note with respect to ideology that 'The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas [...] The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production.'¹¹⁹ As implied by the extract from Gramsci cited above and by this writer's animosity towards other Italian socialists, 'the ruling idea' of the dominant group concerns not only the hierarchical pair of ruling class/proletariat, but also other alternative pecking orders complicated and intertwined with

¹¹⁷ *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, p. 173-174.

¹¹⁸ *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, p. 174.

¹¹⁹ Marx and Engels 1970, p. 64.

various binary concepts such as centre/periphery, Northern socialists/Southern socialists, literate/illiterate, and culture/nature – both within and outside a class position or class consciousness. The dominant group imposes their view as a commonsense ideology through their distorted construction and representation of the binary opposites in society in a manner that greatly advantages their own position of power.

In Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935), the power of ideology that serves to justify the interests of dominant groups is conceptualised as hegemony. The term 'hegemony,' which initially referred to the dominance of one state within a confederation, is now generally understood through Gramsci's argument to mean domination achieved through a combination of 'force' and 'consent.'¹²⁰ Drawing on Gramsci, Dominic Strinati defines the process of hegemony as follows:

Dominant groups in society, including fundamentally but not exclusively the ruling class, maintain their dominance by securing the 'spontaneous consent' of subordinate groups, including the working class, through the negotiated construction of a political and ideological consensus which incorporates both dominant and dominated groups.¹²¹

In the achievement of hegemony, the ideology of the dominant group receives commonsense 'spontaneous consent' from other groups in a manner that justifies the dominance of the ruling elite. Like Gramsci's 'Southerners,' any group that voluntarily or involuntarily deviates from the ideology, is marginalised. From this perspective, Japan's Burakumin people might be seen as the country's metaphoric southerners. In the case of Kumano Burakumin, the metaphor becomes literal.

¹²⁰ Loomba 1998, p. 30 and Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 106-108.

¹²¹ Strinati 1995, p. 165.

Subaltern, meaning ‘of inferior rank,’¹²² is a term originally proposed in the work of Gramsci in reference to the socially oppressed. Subaltern groups are subject to the social hegemony of the dominant classes. With this in mind, Gramsci sets out to formulate the methodological criteria by means of which it might be possible to recover the ‘necessarily fragmented and episodic’ history of the subaltern classes in order that the voices of the members of this group might be heard.¹²³ The process involved, however, is not without difficulty.

There undoubtedly does exist a tendency to [...] unification in the historical activity of these groups, but this tendency is continually interrupted by the activity of the ruling groups [...]. Subaltern groups are always subject to the activity of ruling groups, even when they rebel and rise up [...]. Every trace of independent initiative on the part of subaltern groups should therefore be of incalculable value for the integral historian.¹²⁴

I argue that Gramsci’s focus on subaltern history has its parallel in Nakagami’s focus on Burakumin oral folklore. For Nakagami, Burakumin folklore has ‘incalculable value’ because it expresses the ‘trace,’ identified by Gramsci, that contains the hidden voice of those, like Italian Southerners and Japanese Burakumin, who have been marginalised by ‘the activity of the ruling groups.’ As we have seen in the previous section, Nakagami also considers the geopolitical subalternity of his birth place, Kishū Kumano, as due to the putative backwardness of this southern region in relation to the hegemonic centre of Japan. Because of their common position, Gramsci’s notes on the nature of subaltern history evoke Nakagami’s view of Burakumin history as expressed in oral folklore. Nakagami’s use in his narratives of intertextuality with Burakumin folklore will be discussed in detail from a Gramscian perspective later in the thesis with reference to the ballad *Kyōdai shinjū* (*A Brother and Sister Double Suicide*).

¹²² Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007, p. 198.

¹²³ *Antonio Gramsci: Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 54

¹²⁴ *Antonio Gramsci: Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 55.

Since the late 1970s, Gramsci's texts have been interpreted in a deconstructionist way by a number of scholars including Spivak, Said, and the members of Guha's Subaltern Studies Group. Said uses Gramsci's concept of hegemony – a form of power relation which, while it suppresses, dominates over others by consent¹²⁵ – to explain certain forms of cultural power in civil society, including the workings of Orientalism. Guha applies the term subaltern 'as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society, whether [...] this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office [*SIC*] or in any other way.'¹²⁶ The work of the Subaltern Studies Group scholars is evaluated by Said as an analogue of all attempts throughout the world 'to articulate the hidden or oppressed accounts of numerous groups – women, minorities, disadvantaged or dispossessed groups, refugees, exiles, etc.'¹²⁷ Drawing on the views of Guha and Said, we can identify *hisabetsu buraku* also as 'subaltern' communities, communities that are on the margin of society because of issues such as class, gender, location, sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion.¹²⁸

While I concur with the views of Said and Guha regarding the subaltern as a general concept to indicate the socially marginalised, in this thesis I will particularly draw upon and emphasise Spivak's view that the 'true' subalterns are people 'whose identity is its difference.'¹²⁹ Spivak also explains the term, subaltern, as 'the description of everything that doesn't fall under strict class analysis.'¹³⁰ In this context, the term subaltern can be appropriated for various kinds of individuals or groups that are socially marginalised and silenced – *mukoku* in Nakagami's term – because of their 'difference.' This is the case even if some in the group have access to

¹²⁵ Said 1988, p. vii.

¹²⁶ Guha 1982, p. vii.

¹²⁷ Said 1988, p. vi.

¹²⁸ Guha 1982, p. vii and Said 1988, p. vi.

¹²⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 272.

¹³⁰ Spivak 1990, p. 141.

wealth. It is important to note, furthermore, that this difference does not only exist between groups, it can also operate *within* groups or within what from the outside appears to be a homogenous community. Drawing on Ania Loomba's discussion of Spivak's proposition 'can the subaltern speak?' I argue that the dominant and the subjugated are positioned concurrently within several different discourses of power and of resistance. The relationship between them is ceaselessly 'intersected' and 'spliced' by various forms of power relations.¹³¹ Nakagami's Kumano narratives depict the most oppressed Burakumin who are discriminated against for multiple reasons – such as being handicapped, immigrant, orphaned, aged, illiterate, or a member of a sexual minority – by the hegemonic mainstream both from outside *and* also within their *hisabetsu buraku* community.

The issue of the intellectual, the learned person whose task is often to support the consolidation of hegemonic structures, has considerable importance in Gramsci's work. As noted in the Introduction, Nakagami saw himself as a 'person who has a (written) language' and who can therefore represent the voice of the silenced.¹³² He was, nonetheless, very aware that the written word paradoxically has the power to silence the voice of oppressed people who, because of subaltern markers such as gender, age or illiteracy, can never assume the role of political or cultural representative for their communities. Nakagami's view of the contradiction inherent in his being a representative (intellectual with a voice) of his own voiceless Burakumin community resonates with the views of scholars such as Guha, Said and Spivak who use a deconstructive approach to interpret Gramsci's ideas on 'the role of intellectuals.'¹³³ Since Gramsci's own

¹³¹ Loomba 1998, p. 231-45.

¹³² NKZ 14, p. 613.

¹³³ Noting that 'all men are intellectuals but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals,' Gramsci argues that while both 'the specialist' or 'layman in the sense of "profane, non-specialist"' have an intellect and use it, they are not all intellectuals by social function. See *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*, p. 303.

writings can be ‘fragmentary’ and ‘unsystematic,’¹³⁴ in the discussion that follows I will draw on Said’s interpretation of the Italian thinker’s ideas on ‘the role of the intellectual’ presented in the former’s 1993 lecture collection, *Representations of the Intellectuals*.

According to Said, Gramsci argues that there are two types of intellectual: traditional and organic. Traditional intellectuals are specialists such as ‘teachers, priests, and administrators, who continue to do the same thing from generation to generation.’¹³⁵ Gramsci criticises the sense of privilege held by traditional intellectuals and their identification of themselves as ‘autonomous and independent of the dominant social group.’¹³⁶ This sense of entitlement results in these intellectuals abrogating any responsibility to change the social and political system from which they benefit. On the contrary, their ideology essentially functions to justify and consolidate the hegemony of the ruling group. Organic intellectuals, on the other hand, are people such as ‘the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc.’¹³⁷ While Gramsci sees these people as directly connected to ‘classes and enterprises that used intellectuals to organize interests, gain more power, get more control,’ he also regards them as actively advocating to ‘change minds and expand markets.’ In other words, unlike traditional intellectuals who ‘seem more or less to remain in place, doing the same kind of work year in year out,’ organic intellectuals are ‘always on the move, on the make.’¹³⁸ Because of this incessant movement, which he regards as suggesting a willingness to embrace social and political change, Gramsci pins his hope on these organic intellectuals to create a counter-

¹³⁴ Mouffe 1979, p. 170.

¹³⁵ Said 1996, p. 4.

¹³⁶ Antonio Gramsci: *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 7-8.

¹³⁷ Antonio Gramsci: *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 5.

¹³⁸ Said 1996, p. 4. To cite Gramsci’s explanation: ‘It can be observed that the “organic” intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part “specialisations” of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence.’ Said insists that ‘There has been no major revolution in modern history without intellectuals; conversely there has been no major counter revolutionary movement without intellectuals.’

hegemony for the subaltern group. To borrow Spivak's words with reference to Gramsci, the intellectual's role is to advocate for the 'subaltern's cultural and political movement into the hegemony.'¹³⁹ For Spivak, the desire of the responsible intellectual must be to realise a social structure in which subalterns do not remain as subalterns but can embark on a track to become effective members of the citizenry.¹⁴⁰ As noted above, the geopolitical perspective is a starting point when considering the representation of the subaltern. I will briefly discuss that perspective in relation to Spivak herself, noting how this also relates to Nakagami.

Spivak: A Postcolonial Scholar of Hybridity

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was born as a daughter of a Brahmin family in Calcutta, West Bengal, India, 1942.¹⁴¹ As a permanent resident alien of the United States and non-resident Indian with citizenship, Spivak sees herself as a 'bilingual person' who has 'two faces.'¹⁴² In a 1993 interview with Chicano hybrid culture scholar Alfred Arteaga, Spivak discusses her desire to involve herself in the cultural activities of West Bengal by positioning herself 'as a person with two fields of activity, always being a critical voice so that one doesn't get subsumed into the other.'¹⁴³ As a translator, for example, of Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi (b. 1926), Spivak considers translation as a project that must paradoxically consider both the necessity *and* impossibility of representation. As a reader of original texts, Spivak claims that a translator 'must have the most intimate knowledge of the rules of representation and permissible narratives which

¹³⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 269

¹⁴⁰ Spivak, Takemura and Ōhashi 2008, p. 129.

¹⁴¹ Spivak and Arteaga 1996, p. 16.

¹⁴² Spivak and Arteaga 1996, p. 18.

¹⁴³ Spivak and Arteaga 1996, p. 18.

make up the substance of a culture, and must also become responsible and accountable to the writing/translating presupposed original [SIC].¹⁴⁴ This claim can be explained as the voice of a hybrid who assumes an ‘irreducible cultural translation’ in his/her identity to be *both* the colonial subject and the Eurocentric economic (also intellectual in Spivak’s case) migrant.¹⁴⁵ This position demonstrates Spivak’s hybridity as both a privileged writer and also as the west’s other.¹⁴⁶

Noted above as the translator of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*, Spivak engages with, while ultimately challenging, the influential French intellectual activity of the late 1960s that encompasses theories related to such ground-breaking notions as deconstruction, second-wave feminism and poststructuralism. The ‘philosophy of 1968’ presented in Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut’s 1985 essay entitled *Pensée 68* (translated as *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism*) includes commentary on Foucault’s 1966 essay *The Order of Things*, Deleuze’s 1968 thesis *Difference and Repetition*, and Derrida’s 1967 essay *Writing and Difference*. Spivak’s 1985 essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ acknowledged as an influential founding text of postcolonial studies, can also be seen as a critique largely informed by *Pensée 68*. Spivak’s essay provides a critical reading of a dialogue between Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) on the topic of the intellectual representation of ‘society’s Other.’¹⁴⁷ In the 1996 essay collection, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (hereafter *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*), Spivak revisits the issue of

¹⁴⁴ Spivak 2000, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ Spivak 2006, p. 72.

¹⁴⁶ Hybridity is one of the most important aspects of Spivak’s ‘reason’ – that is, her motive – for seeking to contribute to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation.

¹⁴⁷ Spivak 1988, p. 66.

representation. I will examine her criticism of Foucault and Deleuze's perspective of representation in a later section of this chapter.

Nakagami: A Writer neither Central nor Peripheral

Spivak's identification of herself as 'a critical voice' can inform our understanding of Nakagami's identification of himself as a 'person who has language' to represent the silenced voice. As evident from the information given above, the social backgrounds of Nakagami and Spivak differ markedly. While Nakagami was a member of Japan's marginalised Burakumin community, Spivak was born into a family of Brahmins, the highest caste in India. Rather than focussing on this class difference, however, I will here emphasise the common status of this pair of writers as privileged individuals who migrated from a peripheral homeland (colonial India for Spivak and the Kasuga *hisabetsu buraku* for Nakagami) to the hegemonic centre (the United States for Spivak and Tokyo mainstream Japanese society for Nakagami).¹⁴⁸ In doing so, I will profile Nakagami's position, like that of Spivak, as a hybrid writer 'with two fields of activity' whose 'critical voice' is situated between mainstream written language and the spoken language of his outcaste community with its large number of pre-war born people without literacy. In his interview with Derrida, Nakagami explains that the aim of his narratives is to 'recover the *katari mono bungei* (the oral tradition)' of people belonging to the lower strata of Japanese society. Nakagami also explains that his intertextual appropriation of the oral folklore of the illiterate

¹⁴⁸ Spivak 2000, p. 1.

community into which he was born is his own ‘strategy’ to ‘give (literary) representation’ to political and cultural issues about Japan’s outcastes.¹⁴⁹

In spite of Nakagami’s stated aim, his writing in fact demonstrates the impossibility of the ‘successful’ written representation, according to literary convention, of the spoken language of his peripheral homeland. This can be seen from the dismissive position sometimes taken by members of the mainstream cultural community, a position that is apparent in a comment by Maruya Sai’ichi (1925-2012) regarding Nakagami’s *Kiseki* (1989, *The Miracle*), which was nominated for the 1989 Tanizaki Jun’ichirō Literary Award. Maruya, like his fellow judges, Yoshiyuki Jun’nosuke (1924-1994) and Ōe Kenzaburō (b. 1935), was a graduate of Tokyo University – Japan’s most prestigious academy – and a major literary figure of the time.¹⁵⁰ Maruya criticised Nakagami’s *Kiseki* as ‘lacking polish’ (*chōtaku o kaku*), claiming that the text did not follow conventional Japanese grammar or idiomatic expression.¹⁵¹ Nakagami responded to this criticism in a lecture delivered while he was in attendance at the 1990 Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany:

Those comments by other [Japanese writers] on the clumsiness of my written Japanese are, to me, nothing other than a clear statement which demonstrates that there is still an unassailable distance between *Japan* and *myself* [...]. These writers criticise Japanese as written by me, a person who left the illiterate world to enter the world of letters, that is to say, the world of the formal Japanese language.

Such comments vividly remind me of the time I first learnt Japanese characters. They make me recall the anxiety that I felt at that time. So, too, do they summon up the inexpressible anger and the strange sense of isolation that I once experienced [...].

¹⁴⁹ This is a category which Nakagami argued included the emperor in addition to the Burakumin, the group commonly understood to be referred to by the term outcaste. See Nakagami and Derrida 1996, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Nakagami was nominated Tanizaki Jun’ichirō Literary Award six times but never received that award.

¹⁵¹ Maruya 1989, p. 388-390.

Therefore I can do nothing but ask: how do *Japan* and *I* connect with each other? Do we overlap or disconnect? Is what I write even *Japan*? Am I a *Japanese*? These are my questions.¹⁵²

As seen from this statement, Nakagami regarded himself as isolated through his mastery of letters from the ‘illiterate world,’ in other words, from the Burakumin community. Nevertheless he also regarded himself as isolated through his non-mastery, in terms of the demands made by Maruya, of the ‘world of the formal Japanese language’ and mainstream Japanese society. Like Spivak, who positions herself ‘as a person with two fields of activity, always being a critical voice so that one doesn’t get subsumed into the other,’¹⁵³ Nakagami seeks to speak with a ‘critical voice’ to question his paradoxical social position, a position which he sees as neither central nor peripheral.

The questions noted above that Nakagami asks about his own identity recall the deconstructionist problematisation of identity in oppositional terms. An understanding of the social operation of binary opposites is a key aspect in the work of both Derrida and Spivak. Each discusses how presence or identity is established only by an absence. We can apply this to Nakagami’s situation by noting that the Burakumin are the ‘Burakumin’ only because they are *not* the non-Burakumin. Discrimination against the weaker pair of a binary, such as the periphery or impurity, inevitably occurs in the establishment of social identification. The ‘weaker’ pair is excluded from the mainstream of a community which demands a consistent and exclusionary identification with the power components of the group. In order to challenge the hierarchy involved in binary oppositions, Nakagami voluntarily retains a sense of hybridity and paradox in himself to write narratives that represent the spoken word. In my thesis, Nakagami’s literary

¹⁵² Nakagami 1999a, p. 345. The emphasis in this quote is in Nakagami’s original quote.

¹⁵³ Spivak and Arteaga 1996, p. 18.

representation of oral folklore, such as *Kyōdai shinjū* (*A Brother and Sister Double Suicide*) will be interpreted as a product of the writer's radical reflection upon binaries such as centre/peripheral and literate/illiterate.

The Theory of Representation

When attempting to articulate the hidden – or subjugated – voice of subaltern groups, the intellectual who undertakes the task of disclosing the consciousness of the socially marginalised must understand the significance of the process of ‘representation.’ In ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ and its sequel work, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak discusses the necessity and impossibility of representation through reading Marx's view of representation given in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852, hereafter *The Eighteenth Brumaire*). *The Eighteenth Brumaire* examines the 1851 *coup d'état* instigated by Charles Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-1873) and the consequent despotism of his rule (1852-1870). Since Spivak's reading of this essay is a key element supporting ‘the paradox of representing the silenced voice’ that is the theme of this thesis, I will here explore Marx's theory of representation and how this has been interpreted by Spivak and other contemporary critics including Karatani and Said. As a starting point for their argument, each of these three scholars (Spivak, Karatani and Said) reads and comments upon Marx's critique of the parliamentary representative system and the literary representative system given in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. I will then present Spivak's criticism of Foucault and Deleuze's post-representationalist view to highlight the often complicit role of intellectuals and the (im)possibility of representing the subaltern voice. On the

basis of these discussions, a number of Nakagami's texts will be interpreted to better understand the Burakumin writer's view of the representation of the silenced Burakumin voice.

In his classic analysis of the French democratic parliamentary system of the time given in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx explains that the relationship between a 'democratic representative' and the 'represented' is that of 'the political and literary representatives' and 'the petty bourgeoisie.' He asserts that even though both belong to the bourgeoisie, given the former's education and elite position, both political and literary representatives are 'as far apart as heaven and earth' from the people they represent.¹⁵⁴ Thus, a representative system inevitably includes a hierarchy between the hegemonic representative – who controls the system – and the represented.

In *Rekishi to hanpuku* (2004, *History and Repetition*), Karatani reads this passage, noting that Marx emphasises the severance of political parties and their discourse from the lived experiences (and suffering) of members of an actual class.¹⁵⁵ Karatani explains that, in the representative system, the discourse of representatives (political parties) can never be considered equivalent to the interest of 'actual [small holder peasant/worker] classes.' This is because the discourses – including the rationale for decisions made and actions taken – are completely 'arbitrary' and 'independent' from the consciousness of this actual class. Citing Kenneth Burke's view, Karatani concludes that 'actual classes' are 'class *unconscious*' (my emphasis) and they are only made conscious of their position as a [small holder peasant/worker] 'class' when they

¹⁵⁴ Marx 1963, p. 50-51.

¹⁵⁵ Karatani 2012, p. 8.

are able to see through (and understand the deceit of) the hegemonic representative's discourse.¹⁵⁶

According to Karatani, Marx's objective in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* is to reveal the 'mystery'¹⁵⁷ or riddle (*nazo*)¹⁵⁸ that made an emperor of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte. Karatani argues that Marx rejects attributing Louis-Napoleon's assumption of power to this individual's ideas, strategies, or character. Instead, continues Karatani, Marx's text asserts that it is only through mechanisms such as political representation or cultural representation – representations which are 'arbitrary' and 'independent' from class – that power is exercised. Moving beyond the bourgeoisie to develop this paradox, moreover, Marx discusses the smallholder peasant as the lowest strata of the hierarchy of the democratic parliamentary system. He argues that this group of people form a class: 'In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter.'¹⁵⁹ He asserts, nonetheless, that, given that 'there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants,' the group simultaneously and contradictorily does not constitute a class. Since, the 'identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond,' and since there is 'no political organization among them,' they cannot be said to have a class consciousness. Marx goes on to point out that:

They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves [*sich vertreten*], they must be represented [*vertreten werden*]. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and

¹⁵⁶ Karatani 2012, p. 8-10. In this discussion, Karatani refers to Kenneth Burke's 1966 book entitled as *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*.

¹⁵⁷ Karatani 2012, p. 10.

¹⁵⁸ Karatani 2004, p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ Marx 1963, p. 124.

sunshine from above. The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself.¹⁶⁰

In this passage, small-holder peasants are discussed as silenced people who are only capable of forming a class – we might also say of articulating a position or, in Spivakian terms, expressing their voice – when they are represented by a ‘representative’ from their own group. However they reject this in favour of a ‘representative’ from the elite class.

Karatani sums up Marx’s view of smallholder peasants as a class with neither its own representatives nor a discourse – voice – that would either represent or protect its own class interests. The group must, therefore, be represented by someone else. The most puzzling element of the ‘mystery’ which Karatani regards as the core of Marx’s discussion is the very fact that, rather than or instead of seeking a ‘representative’ from their own group, smallholder peasants consciously cast their ballots for Louis-Napoleon as their ‘emperor.’ If they had chosen someone from their own group, this representative would have been able to take these ‘voiceless’ people into the political arena and thereby give them a political voice.¹⁶¹

The Postcolonial/Poststructural Reading of Marx

Both Said and Spivak cite and discuss Marx’s passage referring to the smallholder peasant. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said cites Marx’s ironic assertion, ‘*Sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden,*’ (They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented), when critiquing ‘the Orientalist, poet or scholar, who, believing that the Orient

¹⁶⁰ Marx 1963, p. 124.

¹⁶¹ Karatani 2012, p. 15-16.

cannot do this for itself, diligently represents this space to “render its mysteries plain for and to the West.”” According to Said, this Orientalist ‘representation’ is always justified by the cliché that ‘if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient.’ Said’s commentary emphasises the need for such representations to be understood ‘*as representations*,’ not as ‘natural’ depictions of the Orient.¹⁶² While the argument here refers to the West’s Orientalist practices rather than the subalternity of the Orient, we can apply Said’s ideas to representations by writers – people who ‘have language’ in Nakagami’s word – which, in confirming the hegemonic power of elites, act to silence subaltern people or even to create new subaltern groups.

In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak also reads this passage as Marx’s ironical view of the way in which Louis-Napoleon fraudulently represented the smallholder peasants, while simultaneously suppressing this group as ‘revolutionary’ subjects opposed to bourgeois interests. Perceptively noting, however, that there are the two senses of representation: ‘representation as “speaking for” as in politics,’ and ‘representation as “re-presentation” as in art or philosophy,’ Spivak points out that Marx’s German text clearly demonstrates the difference between these two senses of representation. In the passage about the smallholder peasants cited in the previous section, Marx uses ‘*vertreten*’ to mean ‘represent’ as to speak for as in politics rather than ‘*darstellen*’ (‘re-present’ as in art or philosophy). Nevertheless, in this passage, Marx tries to articulate the smallholder peasants as a social ‘subject’ whose consciousness is suppressed by the parliamentary representative and also dislocated from and incoherent for those such as writers and artists who represent these peasants in cultural production. Furthermore, the representation of the smallholder peasants undertaken by elite writers and artists is completely

¹⁶² Said 1995, p. 20-21.

dislocated from the smallholder peasant's lived experience. Through this textual analysis of Marx's discussion of the smallholder peasant, Spivak argues that, in addition to exposing the fraudulent nature of elite parliamentary representation, Marxist scholars have a responsibility to expose the fraudulent nature of cultural representation – including literature – by the elites.¹⁶³

Spivak's Criticism of Foucault and Deleuze

While she respects the position of Marx, Spivak criticises both Foucault and Deleuze for what she regards as their carelessness in confusing the two senses of representation: 'representation as "speaking for [politically]"' and 'representation as "re-presentation."' In her critique, Spivak cites several passages from the commentary given by Deleuze in 'Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze' (1972). In this work, Deleuze declares that 'There is no more representation; there's nothing but action' – particularly 'action of theory and action of practice which relate to each other as relays and form networks.'¹⁶⁴ Noting that his view is problematic, Spivak disputes Deleuze's statement.

Since theory is also only 'action,' the theoretician does not represent (speak for) the oppressed group. Indeed, the subject is not seen as a representative consciousness (one representing reality adequately). These two senses of representation – within state information and the law, on the one hand, and in subject-predication, on the other – are related but irreducibly discontinuous. To cover over the discontinuity with an analogy that is presented as a prop reflects again a paradoxical subject-privileging. *Because* 'the person who speaks and acts ... is always a multiplicity,' no 'theorizing intellectual ... [or] party or ... union' can represent 'those who act and struggle.'¹⁶⁵ Are those who act and *struggle* mute, as opposed to those who act and *speak*? These immense problems are buried in the

¹⁶³ Spivak 1999, p. 256-260.

¹⁶⁴ Foucault and Deleuze 1977, p. 205-217.

¹⁶⁵ These words in inverted commas are cited by Spivak from Foucault and Deleuze 1977, p. 206.

differences between the ‘same’ words: consciousness and conscience (both *conscience* in French), representation and re-presentation.¹⁶⁶

As argued by Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, the elite representative (parliamentary or cultural) deprives the social subject of ‘representative consciousness (one re-presenting reality adequately).’ In Spivak’s interpretation of the Foucault-Deleuze conversation, these two intellectuals simply believe that (as a result of their own theories and actions) the oppressed can be heard and will have influence in the wider society.¹⁶⁷ While she does not accuse the French thinkers of deliberate oppression, she does argue that they efface the subaltern voice. Most importantly, in their representations of the subaltern, Deleuze and Foucault ‘systematically [...] ignore the question of ideology and their own implication in intellectual and economic history.’¹⁶⁸ Spivak writes, quite cynically in fact, that what many leftist intellectuals display is often nothing more than a list of ‘politically uncanny subalterns’ that they have known. For her, therefore, these intellectuals self-construct as ‘transparent,’ that is, as invisible in the process of the oppressive representation of subaltern groups. In this way, they abrogate responsibility towards those groups.¹⁶⁹

To Spivak, the projects undertaken by scholars such as Foucault or Deleuze are merely reports on the ‘nonrepresented subject,’ which, in spite of the claims made by these scholars, only provide a superficial analysis (which is not actually an analysis) of the operation of ‘the power and desire of the [hegemonic] Subject.’ Their work, therefore, provides no opportunity for the oppressed to speak. Citing Said, Spivak criticises Foucault’s view of power for obliterating ‘the rôle of class, the rôle of economics, the rôle of insurgency and rebellion.’

¹⁶⁶ Spivak 1999, p. 256-257. Emphasised in the original by Spivak from Foucault and Deleuze 1977, p. 206.

¹⁶⁷ Spivak 1999, p. 257.

¹⁶⁸ Spivak 1999, p. 249.

¹⁶⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 257.

She rejects the Foucault-Deleuze conversation for the refusal of both as intellectuals to see that difference existed between terms such as ‘representation’ and ‘power.’ She argues, therefore, that both Deleuze and Foucault belong to ‘the exploiters’ side of the international division of labour.’ No matter how they sincerely might try to critique the constitution of the global hegemony of Europe and the west, they are irretrievably caught within the process of the production of the Other of Europe and the west. Spivak appropriates Foucault’s term of ‘epistemic violence’ to refer to the interest of the intellectual whose secret power and desire persistently constitute ‘the Other as the Self’s shadow.’¹⁷⁰ The Foucault-Deleuze conversation is, thus, a good example of how the hegemonic discourse of the intellectual entrenches the oppression of the subaltern, even in conversations between those, like Foucault and Deleuze, whom Gramsci would surely have regarded as potential organic intellectuals.

The Subaltern Cannot Speak: Spivak’s Representation of the Subaltern Woman’s Voice

Spivak asks whether either ‘the intellectual’ or even the ‘indigenous’ representative – whom she refers to as the ‘native informant’ – can ‘represent’ the subaltern voice.¹⁷¹ In Spivak’s terminology, the native informant is a member of the subaltern group who is co-opted by the dominant group. Seen by dominants as a ‘blank’ on which they can impress their ideas, the native informant is thus ‘generative of a text of cultural identity that only the West or Western-model discipline could inscribe.’¹⁷² As apparent from the title, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak warns that the discourse of postcolonial/colonial studies can possibly become an ‘alibi’

¹⁷⁰ Spivak 1999, p. 265-266.

¹⁷¹ Spivak 1999, p. 283.

¹⁷² Spivak 1999, p. 6.

which serves ‘the production of current neo-colonial knowledge.’ This alibi emerges when a native informant from ‘the South,’ i.e. the subaltern space, represents his/her silenced voice for the interest of ‘the North,’ i.e. hegemonic mainstream. In doing so, he/she becomes the ‘self-marginalizing’ or ‘self-consolidating’ postcolonial subject. This transformation removes the possibility of legitimate ‘native’ information being delivered by the informant.¹⁷³ The discourse of such a postcolonial subject inevitably assists the domination of the ‘South’ by the ‘North’ and supports the latter’s idea of ‘binarism’ which institutionalises discrimination and the associated hierarchies of meaning inherent in pairs such as centre/periphery, culture/nature and male/female.¹⁷⁴ Such binarism continually creates new forms of oppression for the marginalised. This mechanism is what I call ‘the paradox of representing the silenced voice.’ Although she suggests that the ‘true’ subaltern group is ‘gender-unspecified,’ Spivak nonetheless observes that her analysis often reveals ‘the poorest woman of the South’ as the most de-privileged subaltern.¹⁷⁵ Spivak calls these women whose voices are erased by the multiple working of ideologies such as imperialism, patriarchy and heteronormativity as the ‘foreclosed native informant.’¹⁷⁶ There is an important discussion between these foreclosed native informants whose voices are never heard and self-consolidating native informants whose voices are co-opted by the hegemony. While the latter entrench the position of power elites the voices of the former struggle to ever be heard. Drawing on Spivak’s ideas, in Chapter Five I will discuss the aged Burakumin woman depicted in Nakagami’s narratives as the ‘most’ oppressed woman of Japan’s South, Kumano.

¹⁷³ Spivak 1999, p. 1-6.

¹⁷⁴ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007, p. 18-21.

¹⁷⁵ Spivak 1999, p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ Spivak 1999, p. 6.

Like the Europeans who tried to represent the East or like the French theorists who failed to understand their own complicity in the production of the Other, when intellectuals or even educated indigenous subjects (native informants) such as Guha try to 'represent' the voice of subalterns, they must be considered as, in Marx's term, 'political and literary representatives' who are as far apart from the represented as 'heaven and earth.' These 'elite' intellectuals are therefore inevitably positioned as outsiders by the perceived 'non-elite' members of subaltern society. Spivak foregrounds the imbalance between the 'elite' and the 'non-elite' within subaltern society.¹⁷⁷ The ever self-consolidating native informant who represents his/her silenced voice for the interest of hegemonic mainstream society is inevitably paradoxical because if a subaltern were able to 'represent' his or her own voice then, by definition, that person would cease to be a subaltern who cannot be heard by others. This, I argue, is the dilemma in which Nakagami found himself.

In the face of the 'epistemic violence' that must inevitably be committed by the intellectual in the process of the representation, Spivak poses the question: 'can the subaltern speak?'¹⁷⁸ She further enquires, 'How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics?'¹⁷⁹ and 'what might the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern?'¹⁸⁰ Spivak notes that the issue of women seems the most challenging aspect of these questions.

In so fraught a field, it is not easy to ask the question of the consciousness of the subaltern woman; it is thus all the more necessary to remind pragmatic radicals that such a question is not an idealist red herring. Though all feminist or antisexist projects cannot be reduced to this one, to ignore it is an unacknowledged political gesture that has a long history and

¹⁷⁷ Spivak 1999, p. 271-308.

¹⁷⁸ Spivak 1999, p. 269.

¹⁷⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 272-273.

¹⁸⁰ Spivak 1999, p. 281

collaborates with a masculine radicalism that renders the place of the investigator transparent. In seeking to learn to speak to (rather than listen to or speak for) the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual *systematically* ‘unlearns’ female privilege [that is of the woman scholar]. This systematic unlearning involves learning to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonized.¹⁸¹

The editors of *The Spivak Reader* (1996), Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean, explain that the ‘systematic unlearning’ of one’s privilege as one’s ‘loss,’ that is as one’s disadvantage, is one of ‘the most powerful tasks’ set by Spivak for her readers.¹⁸² Noting that there is no ‘contemporary metropolitan investigator’ who is not influenced by ‘the masculine-imperialist ideological formation,’¹⁸³ Spivak acknowledges that she herself is a privileged intellectual. For her, the ‘unlearning project’ must start from the articulation of the scholar-subject’s attachment to hegemonic formations – ‘by *measuring* silences, if necessary – into [SIC] the object of investigation.’¹⁸⁴ When we try to find how to ‘speak to (rather than listen to or speak for),’ we realise that our privilege has become an obstacle, that is, a ‘loss’ or disadvantage for the activity. According to Spivak, unlearning our knowledge lets us confront and invalidate masculine-imperialist discourse that leads to oppression. Thus, in her words, intellectuals must ‘critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide’ so that we can eventually ‘touch the consciousness of the people’ without involving a ‘continuing construction of the subaltern.’¹⁸⁵ In his writing, for example, Nakagami adopts a number of strategies, that are not always successful, to depict the defiance of women against masculinist practice. These attempts closely parallel Spivak’s call for a need to critique postcolonial discourse ‘with the best tools it [i.e. postcolonial discourse] can provide.’

¹⁸¹ Spivak 1988, p. 295.

¹⁸² Landry and Maclean 1996, p. 4.

¹⁸³ Spivak 1999, p. 283.

¹⁸⁴ Spivak 1999, p. 284.

¹⁸⁵ Spivak 1999, p. 281.

For her analysis of the socially silenced woman, Spivak selects the dead Indian women subjected to *sati*, the Hindu practice of the widowed woman's self-immolation on her husband's pyre. These women's voices were effaced by the mixed workings of both the imperialist and domestic patriarchy complicit in India. I will firstly explore how Spivak regards both imperialist and nativist discourses as silencing Indian women in the context of *sati*. I will then discuss her interpretation of the suicide of an unmarried woman activist in terms of 'speaking' or giving voice to this dead woman's consciousness.

The Hindu practice of *sati* was banned by the British Raj in 1829 within that administration's territories in India. This abolition was historically regarded by the West as a 'case of White men' gallantly 'saving brown women from brown men.'¹⁸⁶ In opposition to this interpretation, however, modern Indian nativists such as Pandurang Vaman Kane (1880-1972) praised the *sati* ritual as symbolic of the 'ideals of womanly conduct' and evidence of 'the cool and unfaltering courage of Indian women.'¹⁸⁷ As Spivak notes, by insisting that 'the women actually wanted to die,'¹⁸⁸ these 'benevolent and enlightened male'¹⁸⁹ nativists claimed to give the burnt widows called *sati* (literary meaning good wife) a voice and thereby transform them into subjects – rather than objects – of the *sati* practice. Spivak goes on to point out, however, that this merely made the women scapegoats in male justifications of patriarchy and nationalism. This argument is logically of the same category as the rationalisation of colonialism by 'White' men who saw their rule over India as their 'burden' to establish a 'good society' in an otherwise 'uncivilised' part of the world. Spivak critiques nativist thought as nothing but a 'parody' of the 'nostalgia for lost origin.' In other words, she points out that nativist discourse is merely the

¹⁸⁶ Spivak 1988, p. 297.

¹⁸⁷ Spivak 1999, p. 294.

¹⁸⁸ Spivak 1988, p. 297.

¹⁸⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 294.

essentialist assumption that native cultures remain unchanged in spite of the violent impact of colonial rule. The erroneous assumption of the native culture and its representatives is that it is able to recover itself at any time to its former or pre-colonial state. Spivak makes it clear, however, that for the practice of *sati* this is obviously not the case. In the 19th century this custom presented a new dilemma for Indian women. If these women chose to become a *sati* they consented to a domestic patriarchal norm. If, on the other hand, they did not, they were regarded as traitorous followers of imperialism. In the 19th century Indian women were subjected to this dilemma regardless of class. In Spivak's analysis of the muted woman, the Rani (Indian queen, the wife of a Raja) of Sirmur is referenced because she was the embodiment of this dilemma in that she was removed from her 'no doubt patriarchal and dissolute' husband and managed by 'a young white man.'¹⁹⁰ Thus, rather than becoming a *sati* in the conventional sense, she was taken against her will to become the '*sati*' of 'the commercial/territorial interests of the East India Company' whom the young white man represented.¹⁹¹ For 19th century Indian women, whether or not to be a *sati* or non-*sati* became *the* issue around which colonisers and nativists vied to defend the rightfulness of their respective ideologies. Neither had any interest in the voice of the real-life Indian woman and both denied her right to assert herself as a subject. In this context, 'there [was] no space from which the sexed subaltern subject [could] speak.'¹⁹²

In contrast to the cases of *satis* and the Rani, Spivak sees the case of a young unmarried woman activist's suicide as a subaltern intervention into – or a 'rewriting' of – the social text of *sati*-suicide. In 1926, during the struggle for Indian independence, the activist, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri (birth uncertain, although Spivak speculates that she was a girl of sixteen

¹⁹⁰ Spivak 1999, p. 233-234.

¹⁹¹ Spivak 1999, p. 277.

¹⁹² Spivak 1999, p. 307.

or seventeen), hanged herself while menstruating. Based on a letter that the girl wrote to her sister, Spivak explains that Bhubaneswari committed suicide because she was frustrated by her inability to commit to terrorist activity. Concerned that her family might think that the cause of her death was an 'illicit pregnancy,' she waited for her menstrual cycle to begin before taking her own life. Because Bhubaneswari's family saw her simply as a *sati* (good wife)-to-be, they never understood the reasons for her activism or her suicide. The 'physiological inscription' to which Bhubaneswari was subjected demonstrates that the motive for suicide by an Indian woman of the time could only ever be rationalised within a framework of the 'legitimate passion by a single male.' Through interviews with the girl's family, Spivak realised that Bhubaneswari's voice could never be heard in the imperial and patriarchal context, because both her family and the colonisers regarded her suicide as a complete 'puzzle,' an 'absurdity,' and 'a case of delirium.'

193

Spivak concedes that, given their privileged status, neither the noble Rani of Sirmur nor Bhubaneswari, a metropolitan middle-class girl, were 'true' subalterns. What Spivak emphasises here by offering the narratives of these women, however, is the impossibility of the voice of the gendered subject effectively speaking or being heard. In the colonial text, the Rani only appeared as an object to be controlled by either colonisers or nativists. Although Bhubaneswari tried to 'speech' her self-conscious responsibility for her death by making her own body an 'instrument,'¹⁹⁴ ultimately (and tragically) the legitimacy of her 'Speech Act'¹⁹⁵ was refused by both her family and the wider society.¹⁹⁶ Spivak explains that:

¹⁹³ Spivak 1999, p. 307.

¹⁹⁴ Spivak 1999, p. 273.

¹⁹⁵ I see Spivak's use of the term 'Speech Act' as similar to the use by John Langshaw Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). Austin discusses the term as a performative utterance which is issued to intend significance as

[...] once a woman performs an act of resistance without infrastructure that would make us recognize resistance, her resistance is in vain.¹⁹⁷

This is the case regardless of a woman's class or status. It is also the case for men of low social status. This excluded political and social position, which denies a subject access to civil society, is what Spivak called 'subalternity.'¹⁹⁸ Her view provides a key perspective to my analysis of Nakagami's depiction of marginalised characters, particularly his Burakumin women. These include Satoko, a prostitute who unknowingly commits incest with her older half-brother, and Yuki, who was sold to a brothel as a fifteen-year-old to support her fatherless family. Like Bhubaneswari, these women were regarded as, using Spivak's words cited above, 'puzzle[s],' 'absurdit[ies],' and 'case[s] of delirium.' Their attempts to express their voices in order to resist their hegemonic centre were inevitably 'in vain.' As we will see in later Chapters, these women had no access to any 'infrastructure' that might have permitted recognition of their resistance.

In the conclusion of her 1988 essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' Spivak noted that because the subaltern cannot speak, it is the duty of intellectuals to re-present them. While this presents the intellectual with a challenging contradiction, Spivak notes that she (the intellectual) 'must not disown' this 'circumscribed' task 'with a flourish.'¹⁹⁹ In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak admits that her 1988 conclusion that the subaltern cannot speak was an

a socially valid verbal action. (See Austin 1962, p. 45-52.) Based on this concept, Spivak sees Bhubaneswari's suicide as a statement of her subjectivity expressed by using her own body.

¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, in addition to being refused by the males of the era, Bhubaneswari's voice is today refused 'by other women.' This is apparent in the narrative of the activist's family given by Spivak in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Here the writer notes how Bhubaneswari's great-grandniece brought 'jubilation' to the whole family when she was promoted to an executive position in a U.S.-based transnational. While Bhubaneswari fought as an activist for national liberation her great-grandniece works as a representative of globalisation that is legitimated and manipulated by the New Empire. As Spivak remarks, this is also an example of the 'historical silencing of the subaltern.' See Spivak 1999, p. 311.

¹⁹⁷ Spivak 2006, p. 60.

¹⁹⁸ Spivak 2006, p. 72.

¹⁹⁹ Spivak 1988, p. 308.

‘inadvisable remark.’²⁰⁰ Drawing on Abena Busia’s ‘positive’ note that, after all, Spivak is ‘able to read Bhubaneswari’s case, and therefore she (Bhubaneswari) *has* spoken in some way,’²⁰¹ Spivak apparently acknowledges that, while difficult, it is possible for a subaltern to have his/her voice heard in some way. In interrogating notions of representation, we have already seen Spivak’s critique of the geopolitical determination of the West including her critique of the role of the intellectual. In addition, we have noted how it is essential for the intellectual to ‘unlearn’ her privilege in order to ‘hear’ the subaltern voice. Through actively committing to these principles, it is possible to support the ‘subaltern’s cultural and political movement into the hegemony’ which Spivak sees as the most important role of the (postcolonial) intellectual. One of the underlying assumptions of this thesis is that although situated in a very different context, Nakagami had the same approach as Spivak to the representation of the silenced voice in Japan.

Nakagami’s Representation of the Silenced Burakumin Voice

Before discussing the paradox of representation and Spivak’s related question, ‘can the subaltern speak?’ it is necessary to establish – following Spivak’s injunction – the geopolitical parameters of Nakagami’s textual production. Almost all of Nakagami’s writing – both fiction and nonfiction – is either set in or references the geographical site of Kishū which was discussed in a previous section of this chapter. The 1978 travel journal, *Kishū*, is a particularly good example of Nakagami’s use of the geopolitical. This text also provides excellent insight into Nakagami’s consciousness of the fraught process of the representation of the silenced voice.

²⁰⁰ Spivak 1999, p. 308. The emphasis is in the Spivak original.

²⁰¹ Cited in Spivak 1999, p. 309.

From March to December 1977, in order to serialise a travel journal in the magazine *Asahi Journal*, Nakagami set out on an intermittent nine-month journey through the Kishū Kumano region. During this time he visited over twenty *hisabetsu buraku* communities scattered throughout the peninsula. While travelling, Nakagami encountered, observed and recorded various forms of discrimination against Burakumin people. His purpose in undertaking this journey was to know ‘what people do not openly talk about, the things that they refuse to talk about to outsiders.’²⁰² The *Kishū* text demonstrates Nakagami’s attempt to discover the significance of the silences that were evident in interviews with both Burakumin and non-Burakumin people during his pilgrimage. Nakagami was struck by the complex nature of the discriminatory practices that he encountered on his Kishū travels. He noted that ‘the word “discrimination” is too simple. “Discrimination” needs to be classified in terms of the spectra of those discriminating and those being discriminated against.’²⁰³

Suga Hidemi points out that ‘*watashi*’ (I), the narrator of *Kishū*, never identifies himself as a person who is from the Burakumin community. Nevertheless, as Nakagami himself notes, the aim of his travels around Kishū is to ‘investigate the roots of discrimination.’²⁰⁴ While it is difficult to pinpoint precisely when Nakagami made public his Burakumin background, Suga asserts that Nakagami’s Burakumin background was unknown at the time of the *Kishū* serialisation.²⁰⁵ Margherita Long, on the other hand, argues that, since ‘the Kii Peninsula is known for its outcast communities,’ and since Nakagami was ‘famous as an autobiographical Kii writer,’ for the readers of *Asahi Journal*, Nakagami’s Burakumin background was an ‘open

²⁰² NKZ 14, p. 481.

²⁰³ NKZ 14, p. 598.

²⁰⁴ NKZ 14, p. 486.

²⁰⁵ Suga 1999, p. 161-163.

secret.²⁰⁶ In her reference to Long, Cornyetz adds that this would have particularly been the case for ‘readers in Kansai, or the southern parts of Japan’s main island,’ who would have been more likely to detect signs that show the status of the outcaste than ‘those in Kantō, or northern half, where there had been historically far fewer outcaste hamlets.’²⁰⁷ It is difficult to judge which view, Suga’s or Long/Cornyetz’s, is more accurate because both are ultimately based on speculation. I will further discuss Nakagami’s identification as a Burakumin, which he refers to as ‘becoming’ a Burakumin, in a later chapter. What I wish to emphasize for the discussion in this section is, as seen in Suga’s view, Nakagami’s stoically forbidding the narrator ‘I’ to identify as the ‘person related’ to the Burakumin people who are the subject of his travel journal.²⁰⁸ Nakagami’s writing about ‘what people do not openly talk about, the things that they refuse to talk about to outsiders’ should be read with this in mind.

In one section of the *Kishū* journal, Nakagami gives an account of a meeting convened by local people in Koza, a small town at the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula. These people had previously requested a correction to material that Nakagami had published about discrimination against Burakumin fishermen from the Nishimukai district in Koza town. Nakagami had formerly written that Nishimukai Burakumin fishermen, newcomers to the profession, were discriminated against by traditional Koza fishermen opposed to the entry of these new players to the local industry. The meeting objected to this claim. The group had also complained about Nakagami’s description of the town as ‘gloomy,’ a description that was seen

²⁰⁶ Long 2006, p. 6 and 30.

²⁰⁷ Cornyetz 2010, p. 127.

²⁰⁸ Suga 1999, p. 161-163.

as antagonistic to the Koza town administration's efforts to promote the area and to downplay Burakumin issues.²⁰⁹

To be honest, [...] I expected to be severely denounced by the people from the *hisabetsu buraku*. This is because I have language. No matter the circumstances, those who have written language are obliged to be 'criticised' by those with no written language. For now, I will refer to those with no written language as voiceless people. I had [previously] seen my role as taking the language of the voiceless and releasing this back to them in order to give it shine and energy. However, there were no voiceless people at the meeting that was held in the community centre at Nishimukai, Koza Village. Those who attended the meeting to request a correction of the 'facts' which I had written were probably there to represent the voiceless people. I was left with an impression of their politeness towards me as a writer of language. I cannot help thinking why.²¹⁰

In this section, Nakagami demonstrates the multiple layers of hierarchy that operate even within a seemingly homogenous group in terms of the relationship between the 'representatives' and the 'represented.' We see above Nakagami, the writer or intellectual in the Gramscian sense who has 'written language,' the local native informant Burakumin representatives and also the local voiceless – in his word, *mukoku*, – Burakumin people. Influenced by 1968 New Left student activism in Japan, the young Nakagami was an enthusiastic reader of Marx.²¹¹ His writing about the meeting with the people of Nishimukai demonstrates Nakagami's uncertainty about his position in his community, an uncertainty that I argue was influenced by Marx's interrogation of the relationship between the represented and those who represent them.

During the meeting, Nakagami realised that, since the local representatives have come to speak, they are not actually completely voiceless (*mukoku*) people. Therefore, it is impossible for him to hear the 'real' voice of the voiceless. This is primarily the point made by

²⁰⁹ NKZ 14, p. 613.

²¹⁰ NKZ 14, p. 613-614.

²¹¹ Nakagami listed Marx and Engels' *The German Ideology* in his 1984 book list entitled 'Monogatari/han-monogatari o meguru 150satsu' (150 Books about Narrative/Anti-Narrative). See Nakagami 1998, p. 249.

Spivak in her essay on the subaltern voice. Like the burnt Indian widow, the *sati*, who is unable to voice her position through multiple layers of oppression of patriarchal colonialism and nativist nationalism, the voiceless Burakumin people experience a state of absence as subjects before intellectuals. We should recall here Abena Busia's note that Spivak's recovering Bhubaneswari's voice demonstrates some possibilities for the silenced voice to be heard. I will discuss below Nakagami's writing of the voice of a fisherman's wife in Nishimukai who privately speaks to the writer.

Not only does subalternity operate on the grounds of structures such as class, race and gender, there is also, as confirmed in much of Nakagami's work, a hierarchy in modes of 'representation' which gives greater value to written over spoken language. Since Nakagami's generation had received the education denied Burakumin from the past, he had access to the written word. Nakagami discusses how the local (uneducated) representatives who attended the meeting in Koza saw the power of the writer's words over their spoken language. Often denied formal education, the subaltern is also denied access to the more powerful mode of written representation. Since as a writer Nakagami came to hold a 'privilege' in Spivak's sense, he became powerless to hear the voice of the 'voiceless.' (This is in spite of the fact that he, too, originally had a background of voicelessness.) As previously noted, this paradox is suggested in Loomba's observation referenced above that the dominant and the oppressed are positioned simultaneously within several different discourses of power and of resistance. The trinity – Nakagami, the indigenous representatives and the voiceless people – contains not only a single three step hierarchy, but also various intersected, less visible relationships which create fluid states of both power and resistance.

After the formal meeting with the Burakumin representatives, Nakagami met informally with a local Burakumin couple. Hiding behind her fisherman husband's back, the wife broke a taboo and engaged in a 'confidential' talk with Nakagami. She explained that although newcomer Nishimukai Burakumin fishermen are superficially able to use any ports around Koza, there are rather unfair differences in charges for port use between them and other Koza fishermen who have traditionally belonged to the industry. Because their own Nishimukai port is, in the wife's words, 'nominal,' and has no facilities, these Burakumin fishermen are forced to use other ports. Listening to the wife, Nakagami realises that 'There is no fact of discrimination, however, there is actually structural discrimination.'²¹² He sees this structural discrimination evident in the administrative 'inefficiency' of the Koza authorities who, in a relatively small town, have formed two different co-operatives for established, mainstream fisherman and the newcomer fishermen. I consider 'structural discrimination' to be what Nakagami aims to make public through representing the silenced voice. Here, this silenced voice is that of the wife who is excluded as 'authorised' by both her husband (although he permitted his wife to speak, when questioned by Nakagami, the husband refused to confirm what she had said) and the other local men who attended the meeting. The Burakumin wife with whom Nakagami had a secret conversation is the native who seeks to speak but whose voice is never heard – except by the intellectual who assumes the responsibility of hearing and representing her voice. She is, in Spivak's term, a 'foreclosed native informant.'²¹³ I argue that Nakagami's writing demonstrates his commitment, to the almost impossible task of representing the voice of the foreclosed subalterns such as this woman.

²¹² NKZ 14, p. 619.

²¹³ Spivak 1999, p. 1-6. See my explanation of this term on p.65.

To Spivak, literary or cultural representation has the potential to collapse the hegemony. It is through the concrete literary mode rather than ‘the accessible abstract in general – the matheme still contaminated by the human,’²¹⁴ which for Spivak includes systems of ‘capital,’ that subaltern women, such as the Rani of Sirmur or Bhubaneswari, can ‘exceed’ the hegemonic system. Drawing on this view, I will read Nakagami’s writing as ‘exceeding’ the mainstream normative Japanese system to reveal this system’s ‘structural discrimination’ against the marginalised. My analysis of Nakagami’s fiction will probe the writer’s attempts to engage in a mode of representation that is not complicit in justifying the hegemony of ‘the North’ i.e. mainstream and ‘the South’ i.e. the subaltern space, nor with the forces that collude to maintain this division in Japan. Through this approach, I will demonstrate how Nakagami refused to become a self-marginalising or self-consolidating Burakumin informant.

²¹⁴ Spivak 1999, p. 245.

Chapter Two

A Voice of a Violent Patriarch and the Silence of the Wife

Nakagami and Japanese Naturalist 'I-novel' Tradition

Notwithstanding the fact of Nakagami's unique peripheral background and the radical impact this has on his narratives, many critics have stressed his late 1960s participation in the literary coterie magazine *Bungei shuto* as evidence of the writer's propensity for and apprenticeship as an exponent of literary Naturalism. This style is regarded as 'the most traditional mainstream path' in modern Japanese literature. The founder of *Bungei shuto*, Yasutaka Tokuzō (1889-1971), was a writer from the Waseda-school which was arguably the most active stronghold for Naturalist literature and its derivative novelistic genre, the 'I-novel' (*watakushi shōsetsu*).²¹⁵ Noriko Mizuta Lippit explains that this is a Japanese literary genre that encompasses a type of 'confessional literature' where the private affairs and experiences of the protagonist often correspond to those of the author.²¹⁶ Edward Fowler also notes that the I-novel is a form of novelistic expression that fundamentally sets out to portray what exponents of Naturalism regarded as a 'realistic' view of the world.²¹⁷ Tomi Suzuki, on the other hand, argues that the I-novel is not a genre but a Japanese 'literary and ideological paradigm.'²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Karlsson 2001, p. 11.

²¹⁶ Mizuta Lippit 1980, p. 13.

²¹⁷ Fowler 1988, p. 3-42.

²¹⁸ Suzuki 1996, p. 6.

There are precedents for Nakagami drawing on his own experiences or mental state to inform his writing. Examples include his essays that articulate the interiority of violent young men such as the students of the New Left²¹⁹ and the young offender, Nagayama Norio (1949-1997).²²⁰ At times, the violent young man referred to is his own self. This chapter will focus on Nakagami's fiction (*shōsetsu*) entitled 'Rakudo' (1976, Paradise), which is modelled to some extent on Nakagami's own life experiences. The narrative of the violent young male protagonist in 'Rakudo' will be analysed as the tale of an 'impotent patriarch' (*fugainai kachō*), a motif that frequently appears in the I-novel genre. I borrow the definition of 'impotent patriarch' from the work of prominent feminist sociologist, Ueno Chizuko, who, as will be explained in further detail below, references the expression in her reading of the I-novel.²²¹

The Paradox of the I-novel

As previously noted, the term 'I-novel' refers to a form of 'confessional literature' in which the events in the story draw, to some extent, on events in the author's actual life. One of the most influential critics of modern Japanese literature, Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983), defines the I-novel as 'a sincere self-confession written in fictional prose.' While acknowledging that it

²¹⁹ For example, Nakagami's 1968 autobiographical essay entitled 'Kakuzai no sedai no fukō' (The Misfortune of the Generation Armed with Wooden Batons) vividly demonstrates his view that, in spite of their violent exterior, like himself these disaffected New Left youth suffered a sense of loss. See Nakagami 2013.

²²⁰ Immediately after Nagayama's arrest in April 1969, Nakagami wrote an essay entitled 'Hanzaisha Nagayama Norio kara no hōkoku' (1969, Statement by the Transgressor, Nagayama Norio), which included both recollections of Nakagami's own life and a fictional monologue by Nagayama. See NKZ 14, p. 220-239.

²²¹ Ueno 2013, p. 129.

stretched I-novel parameters, Kobayashi regarded *Confessions* (1770), the autobiography of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), as the originary source of the I-novel form.²²²

The progenitor of the I-novel was no doubt Jean-Jacques Rousseau. At least he was the first to be clearly conscious of the question of the confessional self, and to make it part of literature. The unhappiness he outlined in his *Confessions* is not that of a hero, but of a common man. Yet readers often find this unhappiness beyond their grasp. To put it another way, they sense in the writing a power that redeemed the author's unhappy existence. This power reveals an 'I,' and salvages something greater than 'I.' The author writes an autobiography, and turns it into literature. In other words, the objectivity of *Confessions* rests on the author's belief in his unrepresented project: to speak without reserve about himself. And what inspired such belief was a prior conviction that if society was a problem for him, then a man like himself was surely a problem for society.²²³

For Kobayashi, Rousseau's sincere questioning of himself and his attempt to write the dark side of his life in order to gain self-awareness lead to a confrontation with the dark side of society and the irreconcilable Other within him. In this sense, Kobayashi criticises I-novelists such as Tayama Katai (1871-1930) and Shiga Naoya (1883-1971) because of their lack of insight into the relationship between the interiority of the individual and the exteriority of society in the modern age.²²⁴ Nakagami was known to be an enthusiastic reader of Kobayashi,²²⁵ and it is not unreasonable to suggest that he was aware of what Kobayashi regarded as the necessity of writing the relationship between 'self' and 'society' in this sense.

Like Rousseau's *Confessions*, the Japanese I-novel often narrates the protagonist's rather self-centred love affairs and sexual activities. For Rousseau, publically writing his private sexual experiences meant to speak the 'truth' of his inner self. This was because, as Foucault explained, sex, a 'thing that was hidden' in the inner self, had been a privileged theme of

²²² Kobayashi 1995 (translated by Paul Anderer), p. 67-70.

²²³ Kobayashi 1995, p. 63.

²²⁴ Kobayashi 1995, p. 92. Also see Morimoto Atsuo's interpretation of Kobayashi's 'Watakushi shōsetsu ron' (1935, Discourse on Fiction of the Self), Morimoto 2011, p. 150-169.

²²⁵ Nakagami and Karatani 1979, p. 12.

confession from the ‘Christian penance’ to the present day. Foucault argues that ‘sex in our society, on a scale of several centuries, was something that was placed within an unrelenting system of confession.’ Given this view, ‘it is truth that serves as a medium for sex and its manifestations.’ He goes on to note that ‘it is in the confession that truth and sex are joined, through the obligatory and exhaustive expression of an individual secret.’²²⁶ Drawing on Foucault, Karatani argues in his *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* that the traditional institution of confession led Katai, a Christian writer known as a pioneer of Japanese confessional literature, to discover ‘sexuality’ and the ‘inner self.’²²⁷ In other words, both the ‘sexuality’ and ‘interiority’ represented in Katai’s most famous narrative, *Futon* (1907, *The Quilt*), were merely constructed ‘truths’ in a Christian-influenced system of confession.

A key characteristic of confessional writing is the depiction of the author’s hidden desire, often seen as an expression of antagonism towards the norm of social morality. Through risking the loss of both reputation and social respectability, the author insists on his/her work as the ‘pursuit of truth’ for ‘the sake of art.’²²⁸ In his essay collection, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen* (1980, translated as *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*), Karatani argues, however, that the I-novelist’s confession is never his/her ‘penance’ but in reality a ‘will to power’ to become a ‘master’ of the ‘truth.’ In Karatani’s words, the hidden voice of I-novelists seeks to express the idea that: ‘I am hiding nothing. This is the truth. [...] What this amounts to is an assertion that the reader is hiding truth while “I,” however inconsequential a person I may be, have exposed it.’²²⁹ When an author claims faithfulness in his/her confession about the ‘private’ inner self, he/she actually exhibits a penchant for ‘public’ masculine political principles. In other

²²⁶ Foucault 1980, p. 61. Quoted in Karatani 2012, p. 112 and Karatani 1993, p. 80.

²²⁷ Karatani 2012, p. 104-112 and Karatani 1993, p. 76-80.

²²⁸ Mizuta Lippit 1980, p. 13.

²²⁹ Karatani 1993, p. 86.

words, ‘private’ narratives about a man and a woman are in fact variations of the expression of the male’s public social role. In addition to Christianity, in Katai’s case, these ‘public’ principles included the modernity necessary for the Meiji intellectual to establish the nation state. It was these principles that provided a basis for the system of confession in the I-novel genre of modern Japanese literature. In other words, rather than contesting the ideals of the nation state, through giving vent to his/her interiority the I-novelist engaged in a mode of representation that was (and still is today) complicit with the external hegemony.

This mechanism, by means of which a subject contradictorily submits to a public hegemonic demand to express a private self, recalls the paradox of representation of the ‘native informants’ discussed in Chapter One. The native informant can become a paradoxical subject who, in Spivak’s terms, ‘self-marginalizes’ while at the same time ‘self-consolidat[ing]’ when he/she represents (speaks for) his/her ‘native’ community to promote the interest of the hegemonic capitalist society. The I-novelist’s exposure of his/her private interiority can also be explained as ‘self-marginalizing’ and ‘self-consolidating’ in the public space. The represented ‘truth’ in the I-novel becomes paradoxical because of this ambivalent state of the writer. I will read Nakagami’s ‘confessional’ fiction, ‘Rakudo,’ based on the I-novel perspectives explained above. According to Takayama Fumihiko’s biography of Nakagami, entitled *Erekutora* (2008, *Electra*), the ‘Rakudo’ plot was largely based on an incident from the writer’s life.²³⁰ This fact, nevertheless, is not directly related to my textual analysis of the short story because I am not arguing a case for Nakagami to be considered as an autobiographical I-novelist. I do, however, argue that, given his *Bungei shuto* experiences and the ‘autobiographical’ elements of his writing,

²³⁰ Takayama 2008, p. 338-339.

it was impossible for him not to come under the influence of this genre early in his career while he was still developing his own writing style.

‘Rakudo’ as the Discourse of the Impotent Patriarch

‘Rakudo’ is one of sixteen narratives in Nakagami’s collection entitled *Keshō* (1978, *Makeup*) and one of the seven stories in the collection which give sequential narratives of domestic violence committed by a ‘man’ against his wife, and his subsequent separation from and reunion with his wife and two young daughters. The story narrates the fragmentation of a family which consists of the male protagonist, the wife, two young daughters and the wife’s parents. The family lives together in a new ‘*tateuri*’ (ready-built house) with a cramped (*neko no hitai hodo no*) garden in the suburbs of Tokyo. With the urbanisation and extension of the suburbs of the metropolis that occurred from the mid-1950s until the early 1970s during the period of Japan’s rapid economic growth, there was large-scale construction of *tateuri*. For most families in Japan at that time, buying a *tateuri* meant acquiring the ‘dream’ house called ‘my home.’ This was in contrast to ‘our home,’ the ‘traditional house’ that had previously been passed down from father to son.²³¹ Nakagami’s ‘Rakudo’ depicts a young husband’s sense of isolation from the family members with whom he lives in their ‘my home.’ The man feels especially frustrated with his wife because, in his eyes, she is more of a daughter to his parents-in-law than his own wife.

²³¹ See Someya 2009.

The passage below is a difficult-to-read scene in which the man acts with extreme violence against his wife and daughters. This violence becomes the direct reason for the wife's decision to leave the marriage and to separate from her husband.

This morning too he returned home after drinking heavily. He had not seen the faces of his daughters for three days. After stumbling as he climbed the stairs, he went into his wife's room where she was sleeping with her two girls. He asked his wife to let him into her futon. The embers of the quarrel with the fellows with whom he had been drinking were still in his head. It was always like that. [...] He still felt bad because of last night's argument. He wanted to sleep being held by a woman – or, actually not by any woman but by his wife and daughters. He wanted to feel the warmth of their touch. He thought that if he could, the tension and dissatisfaction that never went away might be dispelled.

'No,' replied his wife.

That was all that started it. He hit his wife. He was a terrible man. [...] He picked up the oil heater which stood in the corner of the room and threw it at her. For a split second, he felt like killing his wife and his children along with himself. Oil spread all over the futon. It was on himself, his wife and daughters. His two daughters, their sleep suddenly broken, were crying and screaming. He could smell the rancid odour of the oil. He looked for matches. There were none in the room.²³²

The man's anger and violence are interrupted by the woman's father crying out that the mother seems to be having a heart attack. The wife shoves him aside to run down the stairs to call an ambulance for her mother. Two days later the man leaves on a business trip for a week. When he returns, the house is empty. Left alone he thinks:

It would have been better if we had all been burnt. The four of us would have gone up in flames. This is a man's heart, he thought. His two daughters would have embraced each other and gone up in flames. His wife would have embraced the daughters. He would have embraced them all. The flames would have become one and burnt the room, then burnt up the house.²³³

²³² NKZ 3, p. 111-112.

²³³ NKZ 3, p. 114.

In my analysis of this confronting scene, I will focus on the writer's depiction of the interiority of the patriarch and his wife's rejection of the 'man's heart' (*otoko no kokoro*), or, to borrow from Mizuta Noriko, the 'discourse of man.'²³⁴

It is not surprising that among feminist scholars such as, Livia Monnet, Nina Cornyetz, Eve Zimmerman, and Anne Helen Thelle, Nakagami's frequent depiction of male violence against women is often condemned as a masculinist and highly gendered – phallocentric – representation of heterosexual relations.²³⁵ Japanese male scholars such as Asada Akira and Watanabe Naomi, on the other hand, dismiss as a 'feminist misreading' (*feminisuto no gokai*) the critique which regards Nakagami's phallocentric writing as contributing to gender oppression.²³⁶ In his conversation with Asada, Watanabe and Karatani, Hasumi, for example, argues that the phallocentrism of Nakagami's work demonstrates '*ryōgi sei*' (ambivalence) in that it draws on narratives of 'physical violence' in an attempt to reveal the system of 'ideological violence.'²³⁷ In this way, much Japanese scholarship – inevitably by male commentators – has focused on what might be regarded as a questionable way of legitimating Nakagami's depiction of gendered violence against society's Other. This 'Other' is often the woman but can also be Burakumin or members of other socially marginalised groups. These critics argue that Nakagami's depiction of violence by individuals is a representation of the cruelty enacted by modern hegemonic society

²³⁴ Mizuta 1993, p. 76.

²³⁵ For example, see discussions in Monnet's 1996 two-part article, 'Ghostly Women, Displaced Femininities and Male Family Romances: Violence, Gender and Sexuality in Two Texts by Nakagami Kenji,' Cornyetz's essay on Nakagami entitled 'An Ambivalent Masculinist Politics' in her 1999 book, *Dangerous Women, Deadly Words: Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Three Japanese Writers*, Zimmerman's 2007 work, *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetic of Outcast Fiction*, Thelle's 2010 discussion, *Negotiating Identity: Nakagami Kenji's Kiseki and the Power of the Tale*. Also see Zimmerman's comment in her 1993 round-table discussion with Karatani, Suga, Yomota and Watanabe (Karatani et al. 2000, p. 197 and 199) and Karlsson's report about the body of critical works on Nakagami in the West (Karlsson 2014).

²³⁶ See Asada and Watanabe's comments in his 1994 round-table discussion with Karatani, Okuizumi Hikaru, and Watanabe (Asada, Okuizumi, Karatani and Watanabe 2000, p. 235).

²³⁷ See Hasumi's comments in his 1994 round-table discussion with Karatani, Asada, and Watanabe (Hasumi, Watanabe, Asada and Karatani 1994, p. 235).

and ideology against those who lack power. They have thus declined to overtly critique the presence of phallocentrism in the writer's work. I will return to these issues in greater detail in Chapter Four.

While I most certainly accept the position of feminist scholars, I am nonetheless interested in the argument presented by Japanese male scholars that Nakagami's depiction of violence does, in fact, permit insights into the brutality of modern hegemonies against those who lack power. I wish to state unequivocally that there can be no justification on any grounds for masculinist violence against women and children. Making such a categorical stand against a cultural representation of violence, however, is less straight forward. In my view, the depiction of male violence against women in literature is problematic when it justifies or reproduces social oppression against women. Moreover, readers of a text – regardless of gender – that depicts the violence of a man including a masculinist rape that sexually objectifies another human-being will find it difficult to avoid feeling considerable psychological disturbance and pain. This certainly is my personal response when engaging with the 'Rakudo' text. Nevertheless, as noted above, I also see a certain conditional value in Hasumi's post-structural view which understands the novelist's texts as a critical representation of the violent base of the hegemonic concepts that drive social relations in Japan. This viewpoint in no way prevents me from condemning violence against real-life women.

Although my reading of Nakagami is to some extent informed by the interpretations of Japanese male scholars, I reject their notion of a feminist 'misreading.' Although up to this point in the thesis I have given a strong profile to the ideas of Spivak, I here wish to introduce the ideas of Japanese scholar, Mizuta Noriko, as presented in her 1993 book, *Monogatari to han*

monogatari no fūkei: Bungaku to josei no sōzōryoku (The Landscape of Narrative and Anti-Narrative: Literature and Women's Imaginations). According to Ueno, this book was regarded between the mid-1980s and early 1990s as the '*terminus ad quem*' of Japanese feminist literary criticism.²³⁸ As Saitō Minako notes, Mizuta's publication was an example of the new discourses of Japanese academism of the time.²³⁹

I will particularly draw on Mizuta's unique reading of the masculine basis of modern Japanese literature. I define Mizuta's perspective as a 'gender critique.' In order to articulate this definition, I will refer to Saitō's perspective of the difference between '[second-wave] feminist critique' and 'gender critique.' Referencing Elaine Showalter's 1985 collection, *New feminist criticism: essays on women, literature, and theory*, Saitō explains that the purpose of the former is to analyse representations of women through a 'female viewpoint,' or 'gynocriticism,' and thereby to reevaluate the works of women writers who were marginalised by male writers in the genealogy of modern literature. 'Gender critique,' on the other hand, focuses on analysing the 'gender ideologies' which appear in texts without necessarily providing an essentialist articulation of any 'female viewpoint' on the part of either the writer or readers of the text.²⁴⁰

Because Mizuta's critique of the Japanese male writers' novels which feature in *Monogatari to han monogatari no fūkei*, is particularly important in supporting my analysis I will quote at some length from this work. Mizuta argues as follows:

Although criticising male writers for the fact that they have never understood women, never precisely depicted women or never represented women as human-beings is [undoubtedly] very correct, it is irrelevant as a critique of male writers. This is because

²³⁸ Ueno 2013, p. 126.

²³⁹ Saitō 2009, p. 13.

²⁴⁰ Saitō 2009, p. 14.

male writers probably depict their own inner landscape in order to search for a dream woman in their disappointment with real women. For example, it is inappropriate to understand men in Natsume Sōseki's novels who are dependent on their wives and eventually come home [as feminist literary critic Komashaku Kimi (1952-2007) does] as non-patriarchal feminists who have a deep [and meaningful] relationship with women. It is also incorrect to explain men's romantic fantasy, their abandonment of the family by drowning themselves in the women of the red-light district, or their monomaniac fetishism in which there are no real woman, as all about the practice of woman-hating.²⁴¹

[...] [M]any modern male writers chose writing in order to persist with and absorb themselves in their own interiority. This interiority is a realm which they can neither see into nor enter unless they pass through 'a dream i.e. through women.' Their interiority is inlaid in the mosaic of modern social structures. Therefore any critique must analyse the structure of the 'dream,' i.e. of 'women' constructed by male writers who tessellate a pattern of their interiority [with images of the ideal woman]. Male writers often selfishly impose their dream on women, or interpret women arbitrarily, and it is the distance between their imagined dream woman and real women which makes the landscape of their interiority so gorgeous. [...] What we can see in the work of the male writer is the inner landscape of the man which can be clearly articulated only through his concocted 'discourse of women.' [The male fantasy of women] is, thus, a 'discourse of men.'²⁴²

Based on Mizuta's perspective outlined above, I will read Nakagami's 'I-novelistic' fiction of a young impotent patriarch's violence against his wife and children in order to identify the 'discourses of men' that feature in this work and by means of which the writer expresses the 'man's heart.'

I previously noted that the I-novel is regarded as a confessional and yet fictional literature of sincere introspection that promotes self-awareness through writing the private life of the protagonist by drawing at least partially on events experienced in the life of the author. Citing the works of both the feminist scholar Komashaku Kimi and the dramatist Yamazaki Masakazu,

²⁴¹Mizuta 1993, p. 76. Mizuta's criticism here refers to Komashaku Kimi's 1987 book entitled *Natsume Sōseki to iu hito: Wagahai wa wagahai de aru* (*A Person called Natsume Sōseki: I am Me*). She also references Tomioka Taeko, Ueno Chizuko and Ogura Chikako's 1992 round-table discussion published as *Danryū bungaku ron* (*A Critique of the Japanese Male Writers' Literature*). The latter profiles the misogyny of Japanese male writers. See Ueno 2014, p. 145.

²⁴²Mizuta 1993, p. 76.

Ueno re-defines the I-novel as the narrative of the ‘impotent patriarch’ (*fugainai kachō*) or ‘ill-tempered patriarch’ (*fukigen na kachō*) who feels strong pressure as a result of the patriarchal responsibility related to his role in the family.²⁴³ The impotent patriarch’s antisocial behaviours such as dissipation, adultery and violence are depicted as occurring in the realm of the private life which makes a strong contrast to the patriarch’s public image as a respectable man (*ichinin mae*) with a family to support. This contrast can be seen in I-novels such as *Ōtō* (1948, *Cherries*) by Dazai Osamu (1909-1948) and *Shi no toge* (1960, *The Sting of Death*) by Shimao Toshio (1917-1986). As noted in the citation of the scene depicting the ‘Rakudo’ protagonist’s violence against his family, Nakagami’s text can be included in the genealogy of representations of the impotent patriarch.

Also featured in the I-novel are the patriarch-to-be and the man who refuses to be a patriarch. These are often characterised as amorous men (*iro gonomi*) who frequent the red light district. *Iro gonomi* have been a key theme in the Japanese literary tradition and are evident in classics such as *Ise monogatari* (*The Tale of Ise*, a collection of poems and associated narratives dating from the Heian period) and *Kōshoku ichidai otoko* (1682, *The Life of an Amorous Man*) by Ihara Saikaku (1642-1693). This type of male is also evident in modern works such as *Bokutō kitan* (1937, *A Strange Tale from East of the River*) by Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) and *Shū’u* (1954, *Sudden Shower*) by Yoshiyuki Jun’nosuke.

In her essay entitled ‘Onna e no tōsō to onna kara no tōsō: kindai Nihon bungaku no dansei zō’ (1992, *Escaping to Women or Escaping from Women: An Image of Men in Modern Japanese Literature*, collected in *Monogatari to han monogatari no fūkei*), Mizuta argues that modern Japanese literature often depicts a man who seeks refuge from the ‘public’ (*ōyake*) space

²⁴³ Ueno 2013, p. 242.

in the ‘private (*watakushi*) realm’ where women reside. As Mizuta explains, in modern Japanese society, the home was considered as the most ‘private’ space in contrast to the sphere of the ‘public.’ The red-light district was also a very ‘private’ space where men went to see women who lived ‘outside’ the home. Like the home, this space was totally detached from society and its ‘public’ principles.²⁴⁴ Mizuta expands on the social significance of this ‘public’/‘private’ divide and how it impacts on literary production as follows:

The more ‘public’ spaces exclude women [...], the more the ‘private’ world and ‘woman’ tie with each other to form the private space of ‘women’ and ‘sex’ which is out of touch with society and the world controlled by politics, laws and economics. For men, the private realm of women and sex is not only an induction into their interiority but often in fact to the very world of interiority. [...] In the structure of modern Japanese society which considered literature as a useless practice that deviated from the focus of [productive] social activities, it was no wonder that the I-novel [*watakushi shōsetsu*], which provided a literary presentation that was grounded in a ‘private’ [*watakushi*] realm, became the mainstream genre in Japanese modern literature and that men who were dependent on women became its protagonists.²⁴⁵

For women, however, home and the red-light district were *never* ‘private’ realms. In fact, the home was the only ‘public’ space available for women to become an *ichinin mae* – a respectable wife and mother who would bear an heir for the family. The wife’s child-bearing, moreover, was acknowledged as the social activity by means of which she fulfilled her role of producer of the labour force for the nation. Although the red-light district was the target of social stigma, it was also a ‘public’ space for women whose economic activity using their bodies and sexuality was legally protected.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Mizuta 1993, p. 63-65.

²⁴⁵ Mizuta 1993, p. 65.

²⁴⁶ Mizuta 1993, p. 64.

Mizuta further discusses the I-novel as a form of literature which depicts men who ‘depend on’ women in their expectation of ‘regressing’ into a ‘private’ realm in which they will be able to fantasise that there is a pure, perfect interiority. Like the protagonist of ‘Rakudo,’ the patriarch depicted in the I-novel often returns home in the hope of relieving his lonely and wounded interiority through his wife’s sexuality. This sexuality is not the *iro gonomi*’s sexuality of the licensed quarters. On the contrary, it is the passivity of hegemonic maternity. For the I-novelist protagonist the ideal home is an embodiment of the perfect unity of his interiority and ‘his’ woman’s sexuality which he expects will embrace his ego like a ‘selfless,’ ‘pure’ and ‘comforting’ mother. The patriarch who assumes this motherhood myth as the woman’s true nature is merely a child who desires a mother’s unconditional love without the need to fulfil adult obligations towards his partner.

Of course, any ‘perfect fantasy’ of women that is constructed by the male is inevitably flawed, given the unrealistic masculinist assumptions that feed this dream. As Mizuta explains:

In spite of these expectations and fantasies, rather than finding happiness or relief through loving a woman, men who flee from the public to the private space i.e. ‘woman,’ single-mindedly become dependent on that woman and agonise over themselves. This is because what they find in the private space is no less the ‘woman’ than the sexed Other.²⁴⁷

Informed now by Mizuta’s view, we can interpret the young violent patriarch in Nakagami’s ‘Rakudo’ as a man who is confronted by his wife as the sexed Other, that is, as a woman who rejects the fantastic image the man has created of her. By saying ‘no’ to her husband’s request to sleep being embraced by a woman, the wife rejects her husband’s desire to ‘regress’ and to become her child. For the agonised ‘impotent’ patriarch, the sexuality of his wife can only be

²⁴⁷ Mizuta 1993, p. 67.

understood in terms of ‘motherhood’ which he fantasises as a pure and comforting selfless love. When he cannot find a home, i.e. his interiority, in which he is perfectly unified with his wife in terms of the metaphor of his fantasised motherhood, the man becomes a furious batterer whose only recourse – since he has departed the public sphere – is to brutally violate his family. In Nakagami’s text, perfect unification and unthinkable extreme violence overlap in the protagonist’s fantasy of his family being consumed by flames. In ‘Rakudo,’ he depicts ‘a man’s heart’ through the image of the family unified in the house on fire. The words ‘It would have been better if we had all been burnt. Four of us would become fire,’ are a prime example of Mizuta’s typical I-novel protagonist patriarch who constructs his inner landscape as the ultimate unity of ‘home=woman=interiority.’²⁴⁸

In modern Japanese literature, including the fiction of the I-novel category and other novelistic forms the suicide (or suicidal desire) of men is often depicted in a manner that implies not only their escape from their agonised inner self but also from women as the sexed Other. Referring to the suicides of both the man and his friend depicted in *Kokoro* (1914, literally meaning ‘heart,’ translated as *Kokoro*) by Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916), Mizuta argues that, for these men, death was only the way to display their inner landscape. This is because both men despaired of ever projecting their interiority by finding solace in the private realm of the woman called *Ojōsan* (literally daughter or young lady, but here used as the name of the character) with whom they were involved in a love triangle. For these men, the woman’s sexuality was paradoxical and confusing because, while it fed their fantasy of being an innocent selfless love like that of motherhood, it also conveyed *Ojōsan*’s strong ‘secular’ desire – that is, desire outside the private realm – to climb socially, that is, to become a respectable wife and mother through

²⁴⁸ Mizuta 1993, p. 70.

marrying a prosperous man. After *Ojōsan* became engaged to the man whose family was rich, his friend and rival in love, who was a low-income student, took his own life. The man – left behind following his friend’s death – then became the husband of the woman but never desired to participate in the public sphere by working or starting a family. Eventually he, too, took his own life leaving behind the wife once desired by both men. Mizuta explains that both the man and his low-income student friend are unable to be either a patriarch or *iro gonomi*. Because they despaired of the woman whom they desired being the immaculate mirror required to reflect their inner fantasy, they were forced to realise that only through the ultimate reality of death could they display their interiority. By committing suicide, furthermore, they effectively rejected the woman as the uncanny sexed Other.²⁴⁹ Nakagami’s depiction of the young patriarch’s suicidal daydream can be also read in this context. This man’s imagination of a collective family suicide through (self)-immolation can further be understood as a thirst for the eternal unification of his family. It can simultaneously be regarded, more importantly, as a rejection of the women – his wife and his daughters – as the Other who challenge him. This sense of fear toward the Other, the very Other about whom he fantasises, is at the core of the impotent patriarch’s ‘man’s heart.’

We might read Nakagami’s ‘Rakudo’ as the narrative of a man who became metaphorically dead when rejected by his wife. In this reading, the wife thus becomes a bereaved widow. In actuality the man’s dream of self-immolation with his family is a dream of the self-immolation of his wife, that is, the fantasised woman’s self-sacrifice for the patriarch. Given this perspective, Nakagami’s depiction of the patriarch’s desire to immolate his wife and daughters can be read through the lens of the Hindu practice of *sati* as discussed in Chapter One. Although suicide was generally forbidden in Hindu law, Spivak explains that *sati* was understood as an

²⁴⁹ Mizuta 1993, p. 69-71.

exceptional suicide that did not violate Hindu precepts because it was ‘sanctioned’ as a woman’s self-sacrifice for the sake of the man to whom she was bound in marriage. Commenting on European expressions of shock and outrage at the notion of *sati* and with a clear tone of disdain for the enthusiasm among western scholars for condemning *sati* while being blind to the gendered workings of their own society, Spivak explains the ideological underpinnings of the rite as follows:

That this was an alternative ideology of the graded sanctioning of varieties of suicide as exception, rather than its inscription as ‘sin,’ was of course not understood. *Sati* could not, of course, be read with Christian female martyrdom, with the defunct husband standing in for the transcendental One; or with war, with the husband standing in for sovereign or state, for whose sake an intoxicating ideology of self-sacrifice can be mobilized.²⁵⁰

Drawing on Spivak’s view, the man in ‘Rakudo’ can be read as a man who acts as the self-constructed ‘transcendental One’ who fantasises about guiding his wife – and in this case his daughters also – to the other world. Furthermore, the dogmatic ‘man’s heart’ of this failed patriarch demonstrates his penchant for and willing subjection to the authority of the ‘state’ which institutionalises his position as the unquestioned head of the family. In this context, the man’s actual and imagined violence against his family reveals that his interiority is nothing more than an insubstantial self-justification that draws authority from the hegemonic ideology of the state.

Voice of the Woman in ‘Rakudo’

²⁵⁰ Spivak 1999, p. 297-298.

This section will explore Nakagami's depiction of the voice of the woman who flees her man. Following the violence enacted against her, the young patriarch's wife takes her two daughters and, with her parents, leaves the marital home. Towards the end of the novel, the man receives a letter from his wife delivered one week after her departure. Given that Nakagami here inscribes the names of his two daughters, Nori and Naho, we might note the autobiographical resonances in this section of the letter.

'I am writing because I feel sorry for leaving home without talking to you properly.' With this the letter began. 'I feel very sad that our marriage has finally fallen apart. I had thought that your drunken frenzies would someday be cured or that I could give you a medicine to make you dislike alcohol but now I realise your outbursts are probably part of your nature [...]. You will never get better with medicine or anything else. But I think you are okay as you are.' As he read through the letter, his eyes dimmed with tears. The shapes on the page were swaying and he was unable to make out the words. He briskly mopped the tears with his palm. 'Nori already knows what happened. She is old enough to know. It seems she secretly went to see [her friend] Tomo to say farewell. Because she could not go to the kindergarten, I took her to the park. All the children were there with their fathers and I could sense Nori gazing at them. Naho seems to have made new friends already. Our children are strong, aren't they? At night, Nori and Naho always talk with each other about Daddy. Nori only tells Naho about fun memories such as when we visited the zoo together or the time we swam together in the sea of the Kii peninsula.'²⁵¹

I have noted that in the I-novel the home is a metaphor for a private realm, the realm of woman. The emptiness of the house in which the young patriarch is left alone is thus a metaphor for his empty interiority in which the voice of his absent wife echoes.

If Nakagami's 'Rakudo' is a representation of the 'discourse of men' that projects the patriarch's inner landscape which can be expressed only through his concocted 'discourse of women,' to what extent does the wife's letter, on the other hand, disclose her interiority? Some aspects of the letter clearly indicate the wife's feelings. There is, for example, a description of

²⁵¹ NKZ 3, p. 114.

her disappointment and resignation at her husband's violence and the end of her marriage. The letter also gives details of the situation of the children after the separation. These elements, however, do really not display the wife's inner landscape. On the contrary, her interiority is disguised by writing about her children's loneliness, their strength and their love for their father. In the 'Rakudo' text, on only one occasion do we catch a glimpse of the wife's inner landscape. This is when she responds with a 'no' to her husband's request, upon returning home after three days of drinking, to enter her futon. Through depicting the wife's letter as one which keeps silent about her inner self and also by confining the wife's voice to the articulation of the word 'no,' the only direct rejection of her husband's fantasy, 'Rakudo' demonstrates that the expression of the woman's voice is unavoidably limited in her relationship with the patriarch. Here, we can recall Spivak's insistence on the impossibility of the voice of the gendered subject speaking to or being heard by the other.

In spite of the unavoidable limits that act upon the woman's expression of her interiority, her silence can also be thought of as an act of resistance. It is true that the letter barely describes her inner self. The wife's act of writing and sending it, nonetheless, implies a Speech Act on her part to keep her interiority isolated from the violence of her husband. In other words, through writing a letter, even a letter in which she declines to express her inner self – the woman's self becomes independent from her husband's discourse for the first time. This possibility recalls Mizuta's view of writing by modern Japanese women writers. Referring to the works of Tamura Toshiko (1884-1945), Miyamoto Yuriko (1899-1951), and Hayashi Fumiko (1903-1951), Mizuta explains the significance of 'writing' for these modern Japanese women.

Works by modern [Japanese] women writers displayed their rejection and their various forms of resistance against the 'discourse of woman' which was concocted by men. While

male [writers] developed their interiority through their own fantasised ‘woman,’ female [writers] discovered their own interiority through separating themselves from the men.

[...]. Only through ‘writing’ did women writers attempt to find the ‘private’ realm to display their own inner landscape. For them, a trigger for their ‘writing’ was often their disappointment with the men.²⁵²

While the letter in ‘Rakudo’ does not go so far as to reveal to us the wife’s private realm, we do see her writing triggered by her ‘disappointment’ with the husband from whom she attempts to separate by sending the letter. As Mizuta goes on to explain, the above does *not* mean that there are no men in women’s interiority. In fact, female interiority was established through the men against whom the women were engaged in conflict within the confines of the hegemonic masculine society in which women’s self was constrained. It was only by separating from these men and the hegemony that operated in their favour that women could access their own interiority. While it cannot be read merely in an interpretation of ‘Rakudo’ alone, the wife’s empowering herself after separating from her husband is seen in two other short stories, ‘Keshō’ (1976, Makeup) and ‘Sangatsu’ (1977, March), both of which appeared in the *Keshō* collection. The conclusion of ‘Sangatsu’ depicts the reconciliation of the couple through the compromise of the wife.

About a decade before Nakagami wrote ‘Rakudo,’ male authors such as Kojima Nobuo (*Hōyō kazoku*, 1965 Translated as *Embracing Family*) and Ōe Kenzaburō (*Man’eng’an’nen no futtobōru*, 1967, translated as *The Silent Cry*) began to present the wife as ‘the sexed Other’ who, through asserting her own self and sexuality, is able to refuse her husband’s discourse. These were two contemporary writers whose work had a great influence on

²⁵² Mizuta 1993, p. 76-77. Although it is not relevant to my textual analysis of ‘Rakudo,’ Nakagami’s real-life wife is also a novelist, Kiwa Kyō.

Nakagami.²⁵³ As seen in Etō Jun's 1965 essay collection *Seijuku to sōshitsu: 'haha' no hōkai* (*Maturity and Loss: The Fall of the 'Mother'*), Kojima's *Hōyō kazoku* particularly is often discussed as a typical depiction of the transformation of family relationships in Japanese society in the 'my home' era. As Barbara Hartley explains, Etō's critique of modern Japanese male writers actually reveals his own 'penchant for absolutist and exclusionary binary thinking,'²⁵⁴ in other words, the dogmatic 'man's heart.' Mizuta explains that the wife in *Hōyō kazoku* is aware that 'her man's return home from the outside world is actually the acquisition of power by the patriarch.' What the wife in this narrative rejects is to be involved in the man's 'act of self-salvation' which relies on sacrificing herself as a woman.²⁵⁵ *Hōyō kazoku* revealed that patriarchal family discourse, which up until that time had been based on the man's fantasised view of female sexuality, had collapsed and been invalidated by the woman who rejected her impotent patriarch. Nakagami's 'Rakudo,' can also be seen in this genealogy of writing which represents the impotent patriarch as one whose interiority is exposed as empty by the woman who departs to leave him alone. As Karatani notes, the I-novelist's representation is paradoxical because in writing the 'truth' of his (fictionalised) private self, the novelist is actually complicit with the public hegemonic system on which ostensibly private 'confessional' narrative is ultimately based. Through using the 'autobiographical' attribute of the I-novel to present the emptiness of the man's interiority, Nakagami reveals an aporia in the hegemonic patriarchal voice.

²⁵³ For example, see Nakagami and Ogawa 1981 and Nakagami and Ōe 1980.

²⁵⁴ Hartley 2003, p. 50.

²⁵⁵ Mizuta 1993, p. 80.

Chapter Three

The Akiyuki Trilogy: A Narrative of a Transgressive Son and the Last Days of the Outcaste Community

The Akiyuki Trilogy

This chapter will focus on Nakagami's most well-known work, the Akiyuki trilogy, as the representation of a transgressive young man and his fragmented family in the peripheral community of Kishū Kumano. As previously noted, this trilogy consists of 'Misaki' (1976, *The Cape*), *Kareki nada* (1977, *The Sea of Withered Trees*)²⁵⁶ and *Chi no hate shijō no toki* (1983, *The End of the Earth, Supreme Time*, hereafter *Chi no hate*). The trilogy, which takes its name from the eponymous protagonist Akiyuki and is modelled to some extent on the experiences of Nakagami himself, is often regarded as an I-novel style narrative in which the hero is depicted as an alter ego of the writer.²⁵⁷ Like 'Rakudo,' however, the Akiyuki trilogy, cannot simply be regarded as a conventional I-novel or a work of 'confessional' fiction. Rather, the trilogy is a work which hosts the emergence of a set of new writing practices derived from overlaying the western influenced Naturalist I-novel mode and a more traditional Japanese narrative (*monogatari*) mode. It was between the late 1970s and early 1980s, while he was writing the Akiyuki trilogy, that Nakagami developed his theory of *monogatari* that then informed his

²⁵⁶ Between the production of *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate*, Nakagami published *Hōsenka* (1980, *Touch-me-not*) and *Sen'nen no yuraku* (1982, *A Thousands Years of Pleasure*). *Hōsenka* is a novel about the mother of the Akiyuki trilogy protagonist, while *Sen'nen no yuraku* is a collection of six short stories about the men who lived in the community several decades before the trilogy commences.

²⁵⁷ Kobayashi 2009, p. 110-112.

production of *shōsetsu* (novels) about the socially marginalised. The first section of the chapter will provide an overview of the first two volumes of the Akiyuki trilogy. Since, however, Nakagami's theoretical discourse on *monogatari* is most fully put into practice in the last volume, *Chi no hate*, the principal focus of the chapter will be on that work.

In Nakagami's works written during the late 1970s and early 1980s, a recurring theme is the dismantlement of the Burakumin homeland that occurred as part of the modernisation and urbanisation policies that were implemented throughout peripheral areas of Japan at that time. As previously noted, Nakagami's birth place, the *hisabetsu buraku* of Kasuga, was demolished as part of the 1969-1979 Special Measures for Assimilation Project legislative reforms. The hill that divided Kasuga from the developed area of Shingū City was bulldozed flat and effectively obliterated. The Kasuga *buraku* reform project commenced in 1977.²⁵⁸ This was also the year in which *Kareki nada* won the *Mainichi shuppan bunka shō* (Mainichi Publication Culture Prize).²⁵⁹ Following this, Nakagami responded to the dismantling of his homeland with an eruption of literary production. In the half decade or so after 1977 he published in quick succession a series of fictional and non-fictional works related to the Kishū region. These works included, in order of publication, the collection of short stories entitled *Mizu no onna* (1979, *A Woman of Water*), the novel *Hōsenka* (1980, *Touch-me-not*), the essay collection, 'Monogatari no keifu' (1979-1985, *Genealogy of Narratives*), the short story collection, *Sen'nen no yuraku* (1982, *A Thousand Years of Pleasure*), the collection of two stories *Kii monogatari* (1977-1984, *A Tale of Kii*), and *Chi no hate*.

²⁵⁸ Takazawa 2002, p. 326.

²⁵⁹ *Kareki nada* also won the 1978 *Geijutsu senshō shinjin shō* (The New Face Award of the Ministry of Education) but Nakagami was not satisfied with these prizes. *Kareki nada* was the first of six nominations for the Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Award but he never achieved his apparent desire to win this prize. See Takayama 2008, p. 375.

Unlike works such as the travel journal *Kishū*, ‘Rakudo,’ ‘Misaki,’ and *Kareki nada*, which appeared prior to wide-spread knowledge of Nakagami’s Burakumin background and the writer’s ‘voluntary’ declaration of his membership of the *hisabetsu buraku* community, works such as ‘Monogatari no keifu,’ *Sen’nen no yuraku*, and *Chi no hate* were written following his Burakumin background becoming known. As previously noted, it is difficult to pinpoint precisely when Nakagami made this background public but it was definitely during the time that he was producing these *Kishū* works.²⁶⁰ In 1977, while concealing his own Burakumin origins, Nakagami nevertheless publically referred to Burakumin issues for the first time in a conversation with senior novelists, Noma Hiroshi and Yasuoka Shōtarō.²⁶¹ Following this, the writer set out on a pilgrimage through the *Kishū* region in order to collect material for the travel narrative collection, *Kishū*. His Burakumin background gradually became unambiguous around 1978 when in Shingū he formed the *Buraku seinen bunka kai* (Buraku Youth Cultural Group) and organised a series of eight monthly lectures entitled ‘Hirakareta yutaka na bungaku’ (All-inclusive Flourishing Literature). To each lecture, he invited well-known intellectuals from Tokyo, including poet and philosopher, Yoshimoto Taka’aki (1924-2013), politician and novelist, Ishihara Shintarō (b. 1932), and novelist and Buddhist nun, Setouchi Jakuchō (b. 1922).

As previously noted, Nakagami avoids using modern terms related to the Burakumin in the Akiyuki trilogy. The *hisabetsu buraku* of Kasuga is referred to as the *roji* (alleyway), a place occupied by people who live ‘like insects or dogs.’²⁶² This peripheral community includes long-standing residents and newcomers such as Koreans and drifters. Initially read as narratives

²⁶⁰ See p. 74 of the thesis.

²⁶¹ This round-table conversation entitled ‘Shimin ni hisomu sabetsu shinri’ (1977, The Discriminatory Psychology Hidden in the Psyche of the Japanese People) appeared in *Asahi Journal*. Nakagami’s comment on the Sayama Incident which is cited from this conversation is discussed in the Introduction of the thesis.

²⁶² Nakagami 1999b (translated by Eve Zimmerman), p. 16.

of a peripheral slum-like Kumano community, 'Misaki' and *Kareki nada* were not regarded as representations of Burakumin society until the end of the 1970s following Nakagami making his Burakumin background public. The terms related to the Burakumin context, therefore, never appear in these narratives. Nevertheless, through the use of the term *roji*, the text successfully conveys to the reader the marginalised circumstances of the people in Kumano, the 'hidden country' of ancient texts.

Chi no hate, on the other hand, unambiguously depicts Akiyuki's background and his birthplace Kasuga as associated with the outcaste context through the use of derogatory labels, such as eta (great filth), which refer to Burakumin. In addition to being a concrete expression of Nakagami's theory of *monogatari*, *Chi no hate* stands apart from the first two works in the trilogy in that it was written *after* Nakagami's identification of himself as the first and only novelist who chose to 'become a Burakumin.'²⁶³ In this sense, *Chi no hate* is much more useful than the earlier works in the trilogy for my particular focus on Nakagami's representation of voice of the Burakumin and the writer's theory of 'becoming a Burakumin.'

Subaltern Family Tragedy

The ambivalence of the young male protagonist towards his complicated family relationships is a driving force behind the tragedy of the Akiyuki trilogy. In each of the three volumes, traumatic past events are repeatedly narrated to demonstrate the conflict that besets

²⁶³ Nakagami and Yasuoka 1980, p. 365.

Akiyuki's family and also to display the significance of the past for the present. An account of Akiyuki's family history is given below.²⁶⁴

Akiyuki's mother, Fusa,²⁶⁵ had five children with her first husband who was a resident of the *roji*. After the death of both her first husband and one of her children, she met Hamamura Ryūzō who drifted into the community from the outside. While Fusa was pregnant with Akiyuki, the outsider, Ryūzō, condemned by members of the Kasuga community as an 'uma no hone' (horse's bone),²⁶⁶ was arrested for gambling. Fusa left Ryūzō after discovering that he had made two other women pregnant. Akiyuki – and his two half-sisters, Satoko and Tomiko, who were the children of these two other women – were born while Ryūzō was in prison.²⁶⁷ When Ryūzō returned to meet his three-year-old son for the first time, Akiyuki refused to acknowledge his father. After leaving Ryūzō, Fusa met a man named Takehara Shigezō. When he was seven, Fusa and Akiyuki moved to a neighbouring town to live with Shigezō and his son. Akiyuki's eldest half-brother, Ikuo, and half-sister, Mie, remained living in the *roji*.²⁶⁸ Ryūzō also returned to the *roji* where, through the dishonest exploitation of land, he established a highly profitable lumber business. As a result, the *roji* residents scornfully referred to him as 'hae no kuso nō' (the king of fly shit). When Akiyuki was twelve, his half-brother, Ikuo, became violent and often threatened to kill Fusa and Akiyuki. Amid rumours that Ikuo and Mie were having an incestuous relationship, Mie eloped with her brother's friend. Ikuo committed suicide

²⁶⁴ See also Appendix 2: Akiyuki's Family Tree.

²⁶⁵ In 'Misaki', Akiyuki's mother is called 'Toki.' Nakagami renamed her 'Fusa' in *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate*.

²⁶⁶ *Uma no hone* (horse's bone) is a derogatory expression for a person of unknown background or parentage. See 'uma no hone,' *Kōjien*, p. 228.

²⁶⁷ In 'Misaki,' Akiyuki's half-sister Satoko is called 'Kumi' and Akiyuki is unsure whether or not she is his real half-sister. Nakagami renamed her 'Satoko' in *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate*.

²⁶⁸ Akiyuki's eldest half-sister, Yoshiko, and the third sister, Kimiko, migrated to Nagoya and Osaka respectively to work after graduating from the junior high school. In *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate*, each already has her own family in the area to which she migrated. In 'Misaki,' because Kimiko was not depicted as one of Fusa's children, Akiyuki has only two half-sisters, Yoshiko and Mie.

at the age of twenty-four. Following her brother's death, Mie has hovered between sanity and insanity.

Scholars generally argue that Akiyuki's family structure is based on Nakagami's own. Borrowing from a 1974 autobiographical essay by Nakagami that discusses his family circumstances, I define Akiyuki's family as 'matrilineal,' that is a family headed by a mother. Nakagami explains that this family, with a matriarch who had been married three times, consisted of an assortment of half-brothers and half-sisters from different fathers. For Nakagami, while the matrilineal family might constitute a '*kazoku*' (family), it can never be an '*ie*' (a family headed by a patriarch). Nakagami recalls that his family experience was as stressful as 'living in a gambling den.'²⁶⁹ Much of this stress derived from the fact that the disordered relationships within his family 'inevitably antagonise[d] both Japanese patriarchal society and the conventions' upon which the hegemonic *ie* family ideology was based.²⁷⁰

'Misaki' opens during the post-war building boom. Akiyuki is twenty-four years old – the same age, significantly, at which his elder brother, Ikuo, took his own life – and working in a road construction gang run by Mie's husband.

Akiyuki lived in a four-and-half-mat room separated from the rest of the house. [...] Come home from a hard day's work, take a bath, eat supper, go to sleep. Get up next morning, wash your face, have breakfast. In the morning when the sun shone in, or as long as it wasn't raining, Akiyuki would put on a cotton shirt, his work breeches, and his split-toed tabi shoes. Every day he did the same.

[...] In the main part of the house Akiyuki's stepfather and Fumiaki, the stepfather's son, were eating breakfast. [...]

²⁶⁹ NKZ 14, p. 159.

²⁷⁰ NKZ 14, p. 159.

Sometimes, Akiyuki thought, he had a strange family. The four of them all lived together, the mother and her child, the father and his child. [...] Fumiaki had been abandoned by his birth mother and didn't think of her as his mother, while Akiyuki didn't think of the man [Ryūzō] in town as his father. His sisters and his dead brother were the children of the mother's first husband. When his mother married his stepfather, she had brought him, the one who had a different father, along with her.

Akiyuki sat down next to Fumiaki and ate. His chest and arms were twice the size of Fumiaki's.

'Next time we get paid, let's go someplace fun,' said Fumiaki, looking at his step-brother's naked torso. Akiyuki glanced over at his mother.²⁷¹

Akiyuki thinks that his family is 'based on lies' and feels constantly oppressed by these lies. The protagonist's indignation towards his mother as well as his birth father, Ryūzō, whom he calls '*ano otoko*' (that man), is heightened when Mie tries to kill herself in bouts of insanity.

I'm my mother's child, period. I have no father. He wanted to turn to the mother and demand that she bring back the brother and sister the way they used to be. [...] An image of the man's face came to him. He could hear his voice, too. Yeah, the man meant something to him. But he wasn't going to call him 'Father.' For god's sake, what kind of mess did you two make? Doing whatever you wanted and making your children pay the price. You're not even human. You're worse than dogs.²⁷²

Akiyuki feels oppressed by the lustfulness of his father. At this point Akiyuki has not had sexual relations. His reluctance to engage in relations with a woman is often expressed as a fear of becoming like his lustful father. It is the fear that 'if he did it [sexual intercourse with a woman] just once, he'd become obsessed with it and end up with his mind in the sewer just like that man, who couldn't keep his hands to himself.'²⁷³ It is not just the lust of the father, however, that impacts upon the family. Akiyuki sees Mie's insanity as caused by her rage at being the child of

²⁷¹ Nakagami 1999b, p. 9-10.

²⁷² Nakagami 1999b, p. 80.

²⁷³ Nakagami 1999b, p. 24.

a lustful mother who abandoned her children except Akiyuki in order to construct a conventionally respectable family, that is an *ie*, with her third husband.

Akiyuki's virginity is carefully watched by his birth father, Ryūzō. Akiyuki feels the presence of the father because he is constantly the object of his father's gaze. Gripped by an urge to spit in the man's face, he reflects.

You've been watching me all the time. Even when I was a child, I could feel your eyes on me. I'll burn them out of their sockets, destroy your gaze.²⁷⁴

Nakagami's depiction of the father's gaze invokes the theory of the male gaze. Laura Mulvey argues that the gaze of men within film narrative constructs women as vulnerable objects for male viewers.²⁷⁵ Although a male himself, Akiyuki is nevertheless vulnerable here to the power inherent in the gaze of his father. Akiyuki also feels oppressed by the gaze of Mie, who sees an image of her dead brother in her younger half-brother. Mie's observation of Akiyuki's sexual status is the result of her fear of lust as the cause of her elder brother's death.

Rumour: Voice of Subaltern Community

Akiyuki is vexed by the endless rumours about his family that circulate throughout the *roji*. For Akiyuki, the *roji* is a place in which he is oppressed by the echoing voices of the inhabitants who 'laughed, celebrated, groaned, violating and heaping abuse on one another.'²⁷⁶ In Nakagami's narrative, rumour is depicted as the 'voice' of the subaltern community. Through his 1984 and 1985 readings of William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha saga, entitled 'Faulkner, hanmo

²⁷⁴ Nakagami 1999b, p. 80.

²⁷⁵ See Mulvey 1975, p. 6-9.

²⁷⁶ Nakagami 1999b, p. 16.

suru minami' (Faulkner, *The Luxuriant South*), Nakagami theorises rumour as a 'violent' factor deployed 'to reinforce the community, to produce narratives in the community and also to dismantle the community.'²⁷⁷ Nakagami sees himself as one of a number of writers, including Gabriel García Márquez, Toni Morrison (b. 1931) and Salman Rushdie (b. 1947), who were influenced by Faulkner's literature to write of a marginalised 'South.'²⁷⁸ Each of these writers – including Nakagami himself – is from an area which, in common with 'the South' in Faulkner's novels, has been marginalised by the mainstream. Evoking Spivak's view of rumour as the 'subaltern means of communication,'²⁷⁹ each writer deploys rumour as a consistent narrative strategy, so that blood relationships and the enclosed subaltern community are commonly depicted through the rumours which people spread. It is also useful to be aware that subaltern 'communication' can be related to the silences which people keep or are forced to keep.

Both Nakagami and Spivak focus on the structure-less structure of rumour that contains no definite origin or end. In the writing of Homi K. Bhabha, this structure-less aspect of rumour is referred to as 'indeterminacy.'²⁸⁰ Bhabha sees 'the chain of communication,'²⁸¹ in rumour as 'intersubjugative, communal' with an 'iterative' power of 'circulation' and 'contagion' that links with 'panic' as one of the effects of 'insurgency.'²⁸² Nakagami expresses a similar position:

Because rumour belongs to the community, its perspective is not singular but complicated, that is polyphonic. I think that there are even larger numbers of speakers of the narrative than polyphony. [...] Rumour is voice; [it is] voice as violence which shrouds the whole of

²⁷⁷ NKZ 15, p. 539.

²⁷⁸ NKZ 15, p. 542-543.

²⁷⁹ Spivak 1988, p. 21.

²⁸⁰ Bhabha 2012, p. 286.

²⁸¹ Bhabha uses Mikhail M. Bakhtin's metaphor of 'the chain of communication.' See Bhabha 2012, p. 270.

²⁸² Bhabha 2012, p. 286.

a narrative and thus activates it. We might say that rumour keeps on being reproduced through the violent device of the voice.²⁸³

At the end of ‘Misaki,’ with his desire to ‘commit one terrible crime and get revenge on the man,’²⁸⁴ Akiyuki has an incestuous relationship with his half-sister, Satoko, who is rumoured also to be the mistress of her (and Akiyuki’s) father, Ryūzō. Even though he is unsure whether or not she is his real half-sister, Akiyuki and Satoko’s narrative repeats the incest narrative of Ikuo and Mie which was also the subject of rumour within the *roji* community. Akiyuki’s uncontrollable anger, or ‘panic’ to use Bhabha’s term, and its consequent wildly impulsive violation of family taboos, including the commission of acts of incest and fratricide as depicted in the ‘Misaki’ sequel, *Kareki nada*, can be seen as ‘affects’ of the power of rumour.

Incest and Fratricide as Patricide

As a number of critics note, it is possible to read Akiyuki’s incest as a substitute for patricide.²⁸⁵ Yomota Inuhiko, for example, points out that Akiyuki justifies his incest with Satoko as an offence against his father. This is because, for Akiyuki, committing incest implies a violation of his father’s biological order and a negation of Ryūzō as the paternal origin.²⁸⁶ The son, however, also expects to be reproached by his father for violating the incest taboo. In other words, Akiyuki desires Ryūzō to be a father who condemns the act of incest that the son performs as a means of negating the authority of the father.

²⁸³ NKZ 15, p. 535-545.

²⁸⁴ Nakagami 1999b, p. 87.

²⁸⁵ For example see Yomota 1996, p. 196, Watanabe 1996, p. 19-26, Iguchi 2004, p. 85-89, and Karatani 2006, p. 254.

²⁸⁶ Yomota 1996, p. 169.

‘I slept with Satoko.’ Akiyuki rephrased it. Even after he spoke the words, other words he wanted to speak were like a whirlpool inside Akiyuki; he thought that he wanted to beg forgiveness. To beg forgiveness, he should humbly scrape the floor with his bowed head. But Akiyuki knew too that a voice in his heart was saying to the man he faced, I have violated you with my penis, which is just like your penis, the one that made me. I will never cease to be your bitter seed for as long as I live. Akiyuki spoke as though he were delirious, ‘I fucked Satoko,’ he waited for the man’s head to smash and bleed against the wall, and to rip, cut off, and cast away his penis; the penis that made Akiyuki and Satoko in different stomachs; for the man to put out both eyes, slice off his ears. Akiyuki waited for the man let out a raging moan of pain [...]. This was, after all, his father. As the father, he should whip Akiyuki, knock Satoko down.²⁸⁷

Nina Cornyetz discusses the manner in which this scene expresses the ‘homosexual’ desire of the son Akiyuki to ‘fuck’ his father, through Satoko, in an act that wields the penis as an agent of rape and power.²⁸⁸ If we accept that this is the case, then for Akiyuki the father’s expected censure of the act of incest also signifies censure of homosexuality. In other words, Akiyuki desperately seeks the father’s hegemonic law to prohibit incest and also homosexuality. According to Judith Butler, being regulated by the father’s law is essential for the son because he can dissolve his Oedipal complex only after internalising the law. According to Butler, resolution of the Oedipal complex largely affects gender identification. She argues that the consolidation of discrete gender identity (masculinity and femininity) and the law of heterosexual desire are affirmed through internalisation of the incest taboo. She notes, however, that prior to this there is an internalisation of the taboo against homosexuality.²⁸⁹ From this perspective, we might note that the unsettled and paradoxical gender identification of Akiyuki, the son possessed with patricidal desire, was depicted in ‘Misaki’ as that of a young virile man with a strong physique

²⁸⁷ This excerpt from Nakagami’s *Kareki nada* is translated by Nina Cornyetz. See Cornyetz 1999, p. 217-218. For the Japanese text, see NKZ 3, p. 362.

²⁸⁸ Cornyetz 1999, p. 218.

²⁸⁹ Butler 1990, p. 63.

who was simultaneously, as noted above, a sexually inexperienced object feminised by the father's gaze.

Kareki nada, on the other hand, depicts the sexually confident twenty-six-year-old Akiyuki in a passionate relationship with his lover Noriko, the daughter of a wealthy timber merchant. Noriko's parents oppose their daughter marrying Akiyuki who comes from the slum-like *roji* community and is the biological son of the notorious timber dealer, Ryūzō. For Akiyuki, a showdown confrontation with Ryūzō is crucial for his reputation and future identity. This is because Akiyuki unconsciously knows that provoking the father's rage both against the son's commission of incest and the young man's fantasy of homosexuality with the father is essential in order for him to become a hegemonically mature adult man who can enter into a heterosexual marriage. That is to say, Akiyuki expects his biological father, Ryūzō, to initiate him into the institutions of the patriarchal hegemony in order that in the near future he [Akiyuki] too can become a father, that is, the patriarch of conventional Japanese *ie* family.

Ryūzō's answer, however, betrays Akiyuki's desperate desire to be reproached for breaking the incest taboo.

'It can't be helped. It happens all the time,' the man said. He laughed in a low voice. 'Don't worry about such things. Even if you two made a baby, even if it were an idiot child, it can't be helped. Although, if you have an idiot child, it's not easy for the mother.'

'I'll give birth to the idiot,' Satoko said.

'Do it, do it. It doesn't worry me if you have an idiot. I own land in Arima. One or two idiot grandchildren will be no trouble.'²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ The first four lines of this excerpt from *Kareki nada* are translated by Nina Cornyetz and the rest is translated by myself. See Cornyetz 1999, p. 217-218. For Japanese text, see NKZ 3, p. 362-363.

Akiyuki realises, when he sees his father laughing at the son's relationship with the half-sister, that his transgression of the incest taboo can never invoke the ire of the perverted patriarch, Ryūzō. Like the outside world, the wider *roji* community most certainly does reproach acts of incest as is evident in the words of a local dance ballad *Kyōdai shinjū* (*A Brother and Sister Double Suicide*), the words of which appear in full in the *Kareki nada* narrative. The ballad, which is frequently referenced in the Akiyuki trilogy as the hidden voice of the marginalised community, tells of the desperate love of a young man for his sister. When the brother expresses his love, the girl replies: 'People who heard this would call us beasts, if our parents heard of this they would kill us.'²⁹¹ When the parent Ryūzō, however, hears of his children's incest, he merely laughs, observing that he doesn't care even if the pair has an 'idiot' child. While I here focus on the Oedipal conflict between the Ryūzō and Akiyuki, a following chapter will probe the father and son's relationship as a 'homosocial' bond between men mediated through the sexed subject of the daughter/half-sister, Satoko. For that analysis of Nakagami's depiction of the incestuous sister's oppressed voice, I will closely read the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad of the Kasuga *buraku*.

Ryūzō's failure to condemn Akiyuki's incest demonstrates his refusal to count Akiyuki and Satoko as members of his conventional patriarchal family. After he became a successful timber dealer, Ryūzō established a legitimate family (*ie*) with his wife, a daughter (Tomiko) and two sons (Yūichi and Hideo), in a home on the heights overlooking the *roji*. In addition to being the patriarch of a conventional family, Ryūzō also leads an underworld group, the Hamamura gang. Both the conventional family and the gang are necessary for him to demonstrate his superior capacity to rule both mainstream society and the hoodlumish groups in

²⁹¹ NKZ 3, p. 415-417.

the local area. As articulated more clearly in the last volume of the Akiyuki trilogy, Ryūzō considers his ‘legitimate’ son Yūichi as the heir to the patriarchal family. On the other hand, he regards his eldest common-law son Akiyuki as the future head of the Hamamura gang. While Akiyuki desires both a conventionally Oedipal and hidden homosexual kinship bond with Ryūzō, Ryūzō consigns Akiyuki to the gangster world that the older man also seeks to dominate.

Akiyuki’s desire to bring paternal ire down upon himself implies his penchant for patriarchy which is caused by his ambivalence towards Fusa as the ‘matriarch’ of his family. Through creating a new family with Shigezō and his son, Fusa effectively rejected three patriarchs. These were her common-law husband Ryūzō, her eldest son Ikuo and her youngest son Akiyuki. After the death of Ikuo, Akiyuki was the only and therefore eldest son in the ‘matrilineal’ family. However, Akiyuki’s privileged position was invalidated when Fusa married Shigezō to create a new family headed by her legitimate husband outside the *roji*. If we accept that the *roji* is a maternal realm, this rejection by the matriarch suggests the exile of these three men from the *roji*. Affiliation with the mother would suggest affiliation with the hegemony of the *roji* (i.e. mother) and thus signifies an attempt to appropriate the ‘fertility’ and associated power of ‘production’ of that site. However, the ambivalence demonstrated by these men towards the ‘mother’ implies a simultaneous desire for matricide as retaliation for being rejected by Fusa and her attempt to exile them from the position of supreme patriarch.

Severed as he is then from the mother, for Akiyuki, paternity, which usually suggests creation, becomes a symbol of destruction and unproductiveness. Ryūzō’s destructive capacity is suggested, for example, by a rumour that he set a fire that razed parts of the *roji*. In *Chi no hate*, his intention to leave the *roji* empty implies the unproductive element in his nature. Ikuo, who

takes his own life – destroys himself – after failed attempts at matricide and fratricide, also shared the inherent flaw of perverted ‘paternity.’ The rumour concerning incest between Ikuo and Mie also implies a sense of unproductiveness. Furthermore, Ikuo dies before creating his own family.

In order to challenge the paternal pattern of destruction and unproductiveness, Akiyuki needs to be based in the *roji* which contains the maternal power of ‘production’ and ‘fertility.’²⁹² In *Kareki nada*, he clearly identifies himself as ‘an illegitimate child of the *roji*.’

In a sense, Akiyuki grew up as a child that the *roji* had conceived and given birth to. Akiyuki had no father. He was not the illegitimate child of Fusa but of the *roji*. The illegitimate child had no father, no mother, nor a single sibling. That’s what Akiyuki thought.²⁹³

In the last part of *Kareki nada*, feeling strong affection for the *roji* that is his motherland, Akiyuki accuses Ryūzō of past atrocities such as theft, murder and arson. This son’s challenge against the father takes place by the river in front of Ryūzō’s wife and the couple’s three children – Tomiko, Yūichi and Hideo. It is the night of the *bon*²⁹⁴ festival, the night on which the *roji* people dance to the tune of the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad.

Ryūzō, however, justifies himself by saying ‘It’s only rumour, that’s all.’ He further tells Akiyuki, ‘You don’t need to care about the *roji*.’²⁹⁵ In this confrontation with Ryūzō, who

²⁹² Asada 1996, p. 26.

²⁹³ NKZ 3, p. 446.

²⁹⁴ *Bon* is a Japanese Buddhist festival that takes place in August during which people show respect to the dead. See *Kōjien*, p. 2224.

²⁹⁵ NKZ 3, p. 451.

displays towards his family ‘an affinity which leaves no room for anyone else to join in,’²⁹⁶
Akiyuki cannot conceal his hatred and anger.

‘You have no right to call me Akiyuki,’ Akiyuki lashed out. That was when it happened. ‘You bastard,’ cried Hideo, making as if to attack Akiyuki. [...] ‘Let me go!’ shouted Hideo violently twisting his body as Yūichi restrained him from behind. [...] Burying her face in her mother’s back, Tomiko began to weep. Akiyuki knew that Tomiko, Yūichi and Hideo belonged to Ryūzō. And although he could only refer to Ryūzō as ‘that/the man’ and never as ‘father,’ there was no doubt that Ryūzō was the legitimate father of the other three.²⁹⁷

When, feeling defeated, Akiyuki walks away from Ryūzō’s family, he is chased by Hideo. In the struggle that ensues, Akiyuki pins Hideo down ‘as if he was raping a struggling woman.’²⁹⁸ Seized with a murderous impulse, Akiyuki eventually kills Hideo. Like the triangular relationship between Ryūzō, Akiyuki and Satoko, the triangle between Ryūzō, Akiyuki and Hideo reveals the homosexual desires of these conflicting men. I will return to examine this point in greater detail through a discussion of ‘homosociality’ in the following chapter.

After killing his half-brother, Akiyuki identifies himself with both his eldest brother (Ikuo), who wanted to kill Akiyuki, and the younger brother (Hideo), whom he (Akiyuki) has just killed. Ultimately, however, through his murder of Hideo, Akiyuki realises that, rather than having been killed by Ikuo, he has, in fact, killed himself. (*Ikuo no kawari ni Akiyuki wa, Akiyuki o koroshita.*)²⁹⁹ Nakagami depicts Akiyuki’s fratricide as an ‘abruptly’ (*toppatsu teki ni*)³⁰⁰ occurring event but, at the same time, as a cyclic repetition of the conflict that exists between the half-brothers.

²⁹⁶ NKZ 3, p. 449.

²⁹⁷ NKZ 3, p. 451-452.

²⁹⁸ NKZ 3, p. 453.

²⁹⁹ NKZ 3, p. 457.

³⁰⁰ NKZ 3, p. 452.

Akiyuki's fratricidal challenge to his father's authority is, however, once more in vain as read in the following reflection that merges the identity of father and son with a third person narrator. The narrator/Ryūzō ponders:

[Ryūzō] had five children, Akiyuki, Yūichi, Hideo, Tomiko and Satoko. However, Akiyuki killed Hideo. [...] Akiyuki should have killed Yūichi instead of Hideo. Irresolute Yūichi is not very dear to me. [...] Hideo was different. He was more similar to the man than Akiyuki because of his heedlessness and bad temper. Akiyuki, however, had suffered more pain. [...] Akiyuki, who would be thirty-two by the time he had served six years in prison for murder, was good value, the man thought.³⁰¹

Although Akiyuki wishes to break away from and deny his family genealogy, it is clear that, in spite of Akiyuki's role in Hideo's death, Ryūzō appears to continue to regard the former as a successor, at least of the underworld Hamamura gang.

Kareki nada ends with the foreshadowing of Ryūzō's role in the dismantlement of the *roji*. This suggests that Akiyuki's status as an 'illegitimate child' of the *roji* will be effaced and replaced by the status that comes with his father's desire to keep him as his successor. For Akiyuki, who now realises the powerlessness of the narratives of both incest and fratricide, there is only one strategy remaining. Ryūzō has constructed a fantasy narrative of past family glory and it now dawns on Akiyuki that the only option available to him in any challenge to the power of the father is seizure of Ryūzō's enigmatic narrative of a fabled past. At the conclusion of *Kareki nada*, the conflict between father and son clearly has the 'capacity'³⁰² to continue into the last volume of the trilogy, *Chi no hate*.

³⁰¹ NKZ 3, p. 477.

³⁰² Asada 1996, p. 27.

Discourse of Narrative as Law/System

After the success of *Kareki nada*, Nakagami, comparing himself to a ‘Russian formalist,’³⁰³ enthusiastically discussed his view of narrative from the Burakumin perspective. In Japan, the late 1970s and early 1980s was a time of ‘new academism’ (*nyū akademizumu*), a trend to the study of western theories such as post-structuralism. This was accompanied by the publication of translations of the work of many western scholars. Nakagami was one of a number of thinkers whose ideas on narrative had a close parallel to those of theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida.³⁰⁴ However, he also critiqued as Japanese euro-centrism the trend to embrace these thinkers,³⁰⁵ and sought exchange, too, with Japanese scholars such as Yoshimoto, Hasumi, Karatani and Asada.³⁰⁶ In this context, Nakagami mounted a critique of traditional Japanese written narratives (*monogatari*) which he regarded as an embodiment of the ‘law/system’ (*hō/seido*) that scaffolded the ascendancy of exclusionist mainstream thought.

This section will focus on Nakagami’s discourse on narrative as ‘law/system.’ This is a necessary precursor to an analysis of the *Chi no hate* narrative since this last volume of the Akiyuki trilogy was particularly informed by the writer’s unique perspective of *shōsetsu* (novel) production as a means to subvert the conventional system of *monogatari* (narrative). While a number of scholars have discussed Nakagami’s approach to narrative theory, little attention has been given to the role of prominent scholar of French theory and film studies, Hasumi Shigehiko,

³⁰³ NKZ 15, p. 426.

³⁰⁴ This can be seen in Nakagami’s interviews with various Japanese writers and scholars included in *Nakagami Kenji zenhatsugen* volume 1 and 2 (1978 and 1980, *Complete Discourse of Nakagami Kenji*) and *Nakagami Kenji hatsugen shūsei* volumes 1-6 (1995-1999, *A Collection of Discourse of Nakagami Kenji*, edited by Karatani and Suga).

³⁰⁵ Nakagami 2004, p. 36.

³⁰⁶ Asada’s first book, *Kozō to chikara: kigō ron o koete* (1983, *Structure and Power: Beyond Semiotics*), sold 150 thousand copies and led to a boom of Japan’s new academism.

in Nakagami's working through his own ideas on this issue. I will therefore begin my discussion of Nakagami's view of *monogatari* by examining the interpretation of *monogatari* in the *Kareki nada* text given in Hasumi's essay entitled 'Monogatari toshite no hō – Céline, Nakagami Kenji, Gotō Meisei' (1977, Law as Narrative – Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Nakagami Kenji and Gotō Meisei). Since its publication, this work has strongly influenced academic interpretations of Nakagami's narratives.³⁰⁷ In an interview with Hasumi, Nakagami himself noted that the essay paralleled his view of the *monogatari* structure which the writer, too, developed from his own text, *Kareki nada*.³⁰⁸ In addition to referencing Hasumi's interpretation of *Kareki nada*, I will note the critic's view of *shōsetsu* and *monogatari*. I will then examine Nakagami's ideas on *monogatari* given in the *Kishū* chapter entitled 'Yoshino,' which, as I will argue, is an essay that provides deep insights into Nakagami's theory of narrative. Nakagami expands upon this theory in works such as the essay series entitled 'Monogatari no keifu' (1979-1985, Genealogy of Narratives) and the public lecture 'Monogatari no teikei' (An Archetypal Pattern of Narrative).

'Law as Narrative': Hasumi Shigehiko's Interpretation of *Kareki nada*

In his 'Law as Narrative,' Hasumi assesses *Kareki nada* as an epoch-making 'work' (*sakuhin*) that illustrates the operation of the *monogatari* form in a contemporary narrative structure.³⁰⁹ The term 'work' contrasts with the term, 'novel' (*shōsetsu*), used by Etō Jun who declared *Kareki nada* to be the culmination of seventy years of the Japanese naturalist literary

³⁰⁷ Nagashima 1996, p. 301.

³⁰⁸ Nakagami and Hasumi 1980, p. 181-182.

³⁰⁹ Hasumi 1984, p. 292-293.

tradition of expression that depicts ‘the real life [the lived experience]’ of the people.³¹⁰ Rather than the character representation that impressed Etō, however, Hasumi, is interested in *Kareki nada* as a ‘narrative’ that reveals ‘law as narrative,’³¹¹ and which affirms the inevitability of the *monogatari* format conforming to a set pattern.

‘Narrative’ is an absolute duty demanded at every level of our lives, so that anyone who resists must inevitably expect to be punished harshly by the ‘narrative.’³¹²

Noting that *Kareki nada* displays the violent nature of ‘narrative’ through the depiction of the hero’s defeat and punishment, Hasumi goes on in a second essay to proclaim Nakagami as a writer who proves that literature is, in fact, a dynamic attempt to resist ‘narrative.’³¹³

As we have seen, the plot of *Kareki nada* details the many transgressions of family taboos – such as incest and fratricide – committed by the male protagonist, Akiyuki, who was born as an illegitimate child from the closed, peripheral community of Kumano. In summary, the hero’s incest with his half-sister and murder of his half-brother, both of which are triggered by frustration towards his father, is undertaken as a substitute for patricide. The archetype of the patricidal narrative can be found in Biblical tales, and also in Japanese and Greek mythologies. As read in Nakagami’s 1989 interview with Eve Zimmerman, Akiyuki’s murder of his half-brother has a close parallel to the Biblical tale of Cain and Abel in terms of one brother killing another in order to win the father’s love.³¹⁴ In his essays on *monogatari*, Nakagami often refers to narratives from the *Kojiki* (712, *A Record of Ancient Matters*) and local Kumano oral folklore

³¹⁰ Etō 1996, p. 144.

³¹¹ Hasumi 1984, p. 305.

³¹² Hasumi 1984, p. 286.

³¹³ Hasumi 1984, p. 182.

³¹⁴ Zimmerman 1999, p. 133-134.

as Japanese versions of archetypical global narratives which demonstrate ‘an absolute duty demanded at every level of our lives.’³¹⁵

Like the ancient Greek tragic hero, Oedipus, the protagonist in *Kareki nada* ‘unconsciously’ constructs himself as the successor to his father by killing his half-brother. This is in spite of the fact that he does not necessarily wish to emulate his father. (Rather he wishes to become a conventional patriarch.) Hasumi remarks that the act of fratricide is forced upon the protagonist (Akiyuki) in order for him to comply with the archetype of the son. In the closing section of *Kareki nada*, the exiled (imprisoned) hero only appears in rumours spread by people in his community. He is thus deprived of his voice and confined in ‘narrative’ as punishment for resisting his narratological ‘duty’ to be a successor.³¹⁶ Thus, Hasumi reads *Kareki nada* as a ‘work’ which foregrounds the discourse of narrative as an invincible ‘law’ that orders our view of the world. Referencing both Japanese and French sources, Hasumi’s essay also demonstrates that ‘law as narrative’ is a principle independent from the other ‘laws’ that govern the world.

Nakagami’s View of Narrative

Stimulated by Hasumi’s argument, Nakagami developed his own view of ‘narrative’ as a ‘law/system’ from the perspective of *monogatari*, that is, the tradition of Japanese writing. In ‘Monogatari no keifu’ and ‘Monogatari no teikei,’ both noted above, Nakagami inverts Hasumi’s notion of ‘law as *monogatari*,’ arguing instead for ‘*monogatari* as law/system’ which can be seen in any art form. He further notes the capacity of the law/systems that develop from

³¹⁵ Hasumi 1984, p. 286.

³¹⁶ Hasumi 1984, p. 296-303.

this principle to violently exclude. Between 1979 and 1985, ‘Monogatari no keifu’ was intermittently serialised in the prestigious academic journal *Kokubungaku*. Publishing an essay in *Kokubungaku* signified Nakagami’s challenge to the literary authorities, both critics and novelists, who made up the *bundan*, the ‘authoritative’ literary community in Japan. Reflecting the influence of the ‘new academism’ which sought to ‘deconstruct’ preceding paradigms, Nakagami’s essay features citations from Derrida’s critiques of logocentrism while also invoking Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s idea of the rhizome. In these essays, Nakagami presented a Burakumin writer’s critique of five of Japan’s most respected writers, Satō Haruo (1892-1964),³¹⁷ Tanizaki Jun’ichirō (1886-1965), Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953) and Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986).³¹⁸ Nakagami identified each as a writer of *monogatari* who invokes (alludes to) ‘*monogatari* as law/system.’ Through reading selected works by these five writers, Nakagami probes the negative impact of hegemonic *monogatari* while also seeking strategies to write against what he regards as this oppressive tradition. On the one hand, because their fiction addresses narrative principle rather than ‘humanity’ Nakagami appreciates these *monogatari* writers, regarding them ‘far away from anthropocentrism.’³¹⁹ And while he severely criticises Tanizaki as a writer who never resists the exclusionist ‘archetype’ of narrative, Nakagami sees that all five writers are aware of ‘*monogatari* as law/system’ and therefore unhesitatingly depict its violent nature in their writings.

While ‘Monogatari no keifu’ is a lengthy and heavily theoretical – but unfinished – discursive series published in a prestigious academic journal, ‘Monogatari no teikei’ presents a concise and clear argument for what was mostly an audience of literary studies students. Since a

³¹⁷ Satō Haruo also came from Shingū. He was not a Burakumin but a son of a local notable doctor in the city.

³¹⁸ The chapter ‘Enchi Fumiko’ (1985) is unfinished.

³¹⁹ NKZ 15, p. 256.

detailed examination of the essay on ‘Enchi Fumiko’ appears in Chapter Five, I will confine my commentary here to Nakagami’s view of *monogatari* given in the public lecture.

Monogatari is a compound of two words, *mono* (things) and *katari* (talk), and the term originally describes the act of people talking about things (*mono o kataru*). As its derivation suggests, *monogatari* is closely tied to aspects of oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. In Nakagami’s view, furthermore, *mono* is ‘soul’ and *katari* is ‘not only the activity of telling but also the passing down of religious precepts and historical memories.’³²⁰ The repetition of this ‘passing down’ leads to the formation of archetypical (*teikei*) *monogatari* codes. These codes, which according to Nakagami include haiku forms based on the use of *kigo* (seasonal words)³²¹ and *kachō fūgetsu* (flower, bird, wind and moon) expressions,³²² created stereotypical rhetorical forms which characterise the Japanese literary tradition. It is these established stereotypes that operate to exclude difference. The oblique corollary of this is that only writing that conforms to these stereotypes is regarded as legitimate.

Noting that archetypes of *monogatari* work to ‘rob novels of freedom,’ Nakagami explains his attempt to ‘shift’ his fiction from these accepted narrative codes as a way to resist the exclusion of difference that is a marker of ‘*monogatari* as the law/system.’³²³ The trace of Nakagami’s resistance to the archetype can be seen in *Kareki nada*. Although this narrative depicts Oedipal conflict between the son and father, for example, the pivotal narrative of patricide is ‘shifted to’ (replaced by) a narrative of incest and fratricide. Through this process of

³²⁰ Nakagami 1999c, p. 225.

³²¹ Nakagami 1999c, p. 224.

³²² For further detail see Nakagami’s discussion on Tanizaki Jun’ichirō in ‘*Monogatari no keifu*.’ See NKZ 15, p. 140-156.

³²³ Nakagami 1999c, p. 232.

‘shifting,’ *Kareki nada* creates a mode of de-centralisation that contests and ultimately disrupts the idea of ‘*monogatari* as law/system.’

Kishū*: Trip to Search for the Roots of *Monogatari

When Hasumi’s essay was first published, Nakagami was travelling around the Kii Peninsula gathering material for the serialisation of the travel journal, *Kishū*. This text was read in Chapter One as the writer’s investigation of the roots of discrimination. I will here read *Kishū*, or an excerpt from this work, as an investigation of ‘the roots of *monogatari*’ in literature and oral folklore.³²⁴ This was the role that Nakagami himself attributed to that text.

A later chapter of the collection entitled ‘Yoshino’ gives an account of the writer’s arriving after dark by car at a town in that famous cherry blossom viewing mountain site. The car headlights illuminate the stalks and flowers of the ubiquitous roadside plant, goldenrod. Nakagami observes that this sacred remote area of Japan is an ‘ideal’³²⁵ site of narratives about mysterious origins. These narratives include Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s novella, *Yoshinokuzu* (1931, *Arrowroot*) in addition to the oral folklore of wandering nobles of the Heike clan. Nakagami then draws a parallel between these narratives and the goldenrod plant.

In the light of the car, the shadow of the florescent yellow flowers stirred lightly. I got out of the car. Bringing the flowers close to my nose and breathing in the hay-fever inducing pollen, I squeezed the blossoms in this land of narrative, ‘Yoshino.’ [...]

I realised that *monogatari* is similar to this tall goldenrod flower. [...]

³²⁴ NKZ 14, p. 628-629.

³²⁵ NKZ 14, p. 632.

These flowers, the poisonous roots of which kill other plants, are a symbol of *monogatari*, and I found them in the place that was the setting of *Yoshinokuzu*.

Visiting [...] the Yoshino region to search for *monogatari*, I see myself as if struck by the poison of *monogatari*. What is *monogatari*? My hunch is that it is like the tall goldenrod. It has roots of discrimination and flowers that lightly wave in the night and blaze golden in the daytime.³²⁶

To many Japanese, the goldenrod represents the invasive nature of foreign influences in Japan. As Long notes, in this passage, the poisonous foreign weed is seen to prevail in the Yoshino region, one of Japan's most traditional narrative sites, and becomes, in Nakagami's eyes at least, a metaphor for the violent nature of *monogatari*.³²⁷ For Nakagami, dynamic *monogatari* (the waving goldenrod flower) has discrimination (poison) in its roots.

Furthermore, Nakagami writes that *monogatari* only exists within the bounds of '*shakai kiyaku*,'³²⁸ that is, within the confines of social convention. We can regard the term convention used here in the *Kishū* essay series as a synonym for the word 'law/system' (*ho/seido*) which appears in 'Monogatari no keifu.' To Nakagami, the term convention or law, and the exclusionary processes implied, can even be a synonym for language and the official systems that language supports. The writer illustrates this idea through relating an exchange with a young Burakumin man who has been unable to obtain a driver's licence because he has been confused by the formal Japanese language used in the traffic regulation handbook.

In order to gain a driver's licence, the young man was studying [the traffic handbook]. Two men of about the same age were encouraging him all the while. At first, he did not understand the sense of words such as 'immediately' and 'prevent,' but, through studying, his literacy gradually improved and he passed the test for the learner's licence. However, he

³²⁶ NKZ 14, p. 629.

³²⁷ Long 2006, p. 18.

³²⁸ NKZ 14, p. 631.

could not pass the provisional licence test. He failed seven times. Actually, what he failed was [not the driving test but] a test of language.

For example, he was confused by a sentence in the regulations that read ‘you must not drive along a highway in reverse.’ The boy claimed that he could not understand this, muttering ‘just reversing a little [should not be a problem].’³²⁹

For Nakagami, this episode signifies that the roots of discrimination that he encountered metaphorically in the form of the goldenrod with its poisonous roots impact on the young Burakumin man’s ability to accommodate himself to the law of language, that is, to understand language as the production of convention.³³⁰ The young Burakumin man in ‘Yoshino’ can be seen as an archetype of the transgressive and unconventional men depicted in Nakagami’s narrative. The ‘Yoshino’ essay, particularly, displays Nakagami’s emphasis on the paradox created by his desire to write against convention i.e. the law of language, while being required to use this same language to write the *monogatari* that give voice to the narratives of the oppressed.

Criticism of *Chi No Hate Shijō No Toki*

While accolades were heaped on the first two novels in the Akiyuki trilogy, critical reception of *Chi no hate* was more subdued. For Nakagami, *Chi no hate* was a turning point in his writing career in terms of both his own motives for writing and his position in the Japanese literary community. Following the publication of *Kareki nada*, the sequel to the Akutagawa Award winning ‘Misaki,’ Nakagami was hailed as ‘a standard-bearer’ of the younger writers who were born in the post-war era.³³¹ Etō even proclaimed *Kareki nada* to be a masterpiece of

³²⁹ NKZ 14, p. 630.

³³⁰ NKZ 14, p. 630-632.

³³¹ Suga 2000, p. 663.

modern Japanese literature (*kindai shōsetsu*). Yet, while Etō and the other ‘great literary man’ of post-war Japan, Yoshimoto Taka’aki, lauded ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada*, they were less impressed by *Chi no hate*.³³² Many critics saw this novel as a ‘failure’ in terms of a lack of drama and tension. Kawamura Minato, for example, argued that in contrast to the strong narrative of ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada*, Akiyuki’s challenge to the father in *Chi no hate* is indecisive and lacks rebellious action. He further argues that the *roji*, once the mythical topos of a tragic family narrative, is now merely a backdrop to the play of current affairs and reality.³³³ Asada acknowledges these flaws but nonetheless sees *Chi no hate* as an epoch-making ‘great failure,’³³⁴ a *shōsetsu* that depicts the end of *kindai shōsetsu*, the end of modern narrative.³³⁵

Chi no hate is an account of the last days of the Kumano Burakumin homeland that was erased in the early 1980s. By 1981, Mt. Garyū and old buildings behind the hill in the Kasuga *buraku* had been bulldozed. In their place, the government authorised the building of a small apartment complex and a main street.³³⁶ Nakagami was vehemently opposed to these moves which he saw as the capitalist erasure of Burakumin difference in a manner similar to colonial era attempts to assimilate and thereby obliterate non-mainstream groups. He argued that assimilation could never bring benefit to Burakumin people because it fostered discrimination against their otherness. As read in a collection of autobiographical I-novel style writings and fictional stories entitled *Kumano shū* (1984, *A Collection of Kumano Stories*), Nakagami criticises what he saw as the complicity between the city of Shingū and groups of Burakumin

³³² See Yoshimoto’s comment on the Akiyuki trilogy in Nakagami and Yoshimoto 2005, p. 49-70.

³³³ Kawamura 1983, p. 200-209.

³³⁴ Asada 1996, p. 29.

³³⁵ This is a concept that was extensively discussed during the late 1960s and 1970s by French philosophers such as Barthes, Derrida and Deleuze. Karatani, Yomota and Watanabe Naomi who, with Asada, are the co-editors of *Nakagami Kenji zenshū* (1995-1996, *The Complete Works of Nakagami Kenji*) agree with Asada’s reading of *Chi no hate*. For example, see Karatani 1996, Yomota 1996 and Watanabe 1996.

³³⁶ Takazawa 1998, p. 257.

traders, both of whom were involved in the dismantlement of *hisabetsu buraku* in their area for their own economic benefit. In these essays, Nakagami further revealed that his own Burakumin family who operated small construction companies made huge profits through dismantling the Kasuga *buraku* and displacing people who for generations had made their homes there.³³⁷ Nakagami's early 1980 production of works such as *Kumano shū* and *Chi no hate* was, I argue, a literary response to the personal crisis he experienced at the loss of his homeland and at his family's involvement in this process. This homeland, furthermore, was the source of his narrative. The loss of homeland also signifies Nakagami's loss of origin as a Burakumin. His decision to voluntarily 'become a Burakumin',³³⁸ was based on this loss.

Dismantlement of the Burakumin Homeland

At the outset of *Chi no hate*, the twenty-nine year old Akiyuki returns from prison to find that the *roji* has disappeared 'as if erased by a rubber',³³⁹ and transformed into grassland. Most former residents have been forced to move to other areas or moved into purpose built apartment complexes. However, some homeless people continue to live in a camp in the grassland. Having actively participated in the effacement of the community of the *roji* and having evicted their old neighbours to make way for land clearance, Akiyuki's family has made excessive profit and become local upstarts.

³³⁷ For further detail see 'Karasu' (Crows) in *Kumano shū*, NKZ 5, p. 425-438. *Kumano shū* includes six fictional works and eight essays serialised in the magazine *Gunzō* between 1980 and 1982.

³³⁸ Nakagami and Yasuoka 1980, p. 365.

³³⁹ NKZ 6, p. 153.

While there is a focus on patricide and Akiyuki's relationship with father, *Chi no hate* also interrogates the maternal. The self-implosion of the maternal society of the *roji* signifies the end of the matrilineal narrative that supports 'Misaki' and *Kareki nada*. Akiyuki's mother, Fusa, has long ago abandoned the *roji*. Mie, who once refused to live outside the *roji*, now repeats Fusa's narrative of abandonment and through her husband's business success unhesitatingly moves into a position of status in mainstream society. Although Mie remains nostalgic for the *roji*, her desire to be a well-off social climber makes Akiyuki regard this nostalgia as mere 'irony.' Although he feels like teasing Mie by saying 'how can you live with yourself after trampling the lives of [*roji*] people?' he does not do this because he can see the trace of her fragility in her sentimental 'weepy' (*nakimushi*) behaviour. After visiting the grassland *roji* camp, Akiyuki decisively isolates himself from his family on the grounds that, 'Blood relationships should disappear with the *roji*.'³⁴⁰

In *Chi no hate*, the 'affect' of the power of rumour – recalling Spivak and Bhabha – is depicted not only at the individual (Akiyuki's) level but also at the communal level. This 'affect' is presented as the outbreak of a millenarian water cult at the commencement of the urbanisation project, a cult that draws followers from both the *roji* and mainstream community. The founders of the cult are a brother and sister who were schoolmates of Akiyuki. This pair eventually kills their mother during a ritual ceremony of purification that is intended to 'remove pollution from inside the body.'³⁴¹ Most followers, including the mother, are elderly women who voluntarily accept cruel acts of penance such as drinking large amounts of water and being whipped. The rumour of their matricide, accompanied by the stench that suggests the decayed body of the mother, which is actually more the stench of sewers that have been severed during

³⁴⁰ NKZ 6, p. 153-158.

³⁴¹ NKZ 6, p. 85.

land reform, spreads over Shingū. In *Chi no hate*, the contagious nature of rumour is associated with the overwhelming anxiety that grips the small provincial city where the authorities implement urbanisation policies through effacing the city's most subaltern community, a community that was the 'origin', the 'mother' of marginality in the area. The cultic brother and sister can be seen as variants of Akiyuki and Satoko. Satoko, who regards herself as indelibly polluted with *kegare*, becomes an enthusiastic water cult follower and willingly undertakes extreme penance. Although Ryūzō has little interest in the fanaticism of the water cult, surprisingly, he feels a great sense of 'defeat' at the founder brother and sister's matricide.³⁴² This contrasts markedly to his indifferent attitude towards the incestuous relationship between Akiyuki and Satoko. The relationship between his son and daughter never once disturbs this father's feelings.

Interchangeable Relationship between Father and Son

Following Akiyuki's return from prison, the father and son re-unite. However, on this occasion the son takes the initiative before the father, demonstrating the possibility of an inversion of the relationship between the pair.

'Hey, Ryūzō', Akiyuki called Hamamura Ryūzō just as if the man was his son. Looking at Ryūzō smile like an innocent child, Akiyuki related a vision he had had to the older man, 'In prison, Hamamura Magoichi appeared in my dream again and again. When our honourable ancestor told me, "Akiyuki, you are my incarnation and Ryūzō is your son," I told him not to talk rubbish. But Magoichi replied that he didn't mind having one inverted genealogy during our long family line.'

³⁴² NKZ 6, p. 280-285

Ryūzō looked taken aback [...] but said merrily, ‘You always take everything away from me.’³⁴³

This scene demonstrates how the novel’s narrative of this father and son proceeds on the premise of the interchangeability of their relationship – that is, the son can be the father and the father can be the son. Furthermore, rather than this being imposed by Akiyuki, Ryūzō himself voluntarily inverts their genealogical order by referring to his son as ‘father’ and ‘brother’ in addition to using the name of his great ancestor, ‘Magoichi.’

To depict the unconventional paternity of Ryūzō, Nakagami invokes the legend, based on historical fact, of the rebellious samurai, Magoichi. Ryūzō’s alleged ancestor, Magoichi, is associated with the *kishu ryūritan* (legend of exiled nobles)³⁴⁴ of the legendary figure Suzuki Magoichi (date of birth and death unknown), the leader of the 16th century *Saika shū*, warriors, who were renowned for their gunsmiths, foundries, and arquebus expertise. Magoichi was the ringleader of *Saika ikki* (1577-1585), a Kii Peninsula uprising ruthlessly subjugated by Oda Nobunaga.³⁴⁵ Ryūzō’s birthplace, Arima, is known as the legendary site of the death of Magoichi. Although the family name of the historical Magoichi is Suzuki, in *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate* Nakagami gives Magoichi the family name of Hamamura. This permits the figure to have a direct connection to Ryūzō whose family name is also Hamamura. *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate* portray Ryūzō’s obsession with establishing a ‘legitimate’ origin for himself as Magoichi’s descendant and also with leading a gang of men known as the *Hamamura shū*, the name of

³⁴³ NKZ 6, p. 30.

³⁴⁴ *Kishu ryūritan* is the genre of folktale narrative about wandering (often exiled) gods, nobles, criminals and pilgrims. The term was firstly applied by Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953), in his *Nihon bungaku no hassei josetsu* (1947, *An Introduction to the Emergence of Japanese Literature*) in reference to narratives of gods who were wandering in an *utsuho bune* (a hollow ship). See ‘kishu-ryūritan’ in *Nihon daihyakka zensho*. In *Kōjien*, the term is defined as stories about wandering noble heroes who overcome difficulty with help from animals or women. Examples of the genre include the *Kojiki* narratives of Ōkuninushi no mikoto, Yamato takeru no mikoto, the Hikaru Genji stories in the ‘Suma’ and ‘Akashi’ chapters of *Genji monogatari* (*A Tale of Genji*) by Murasaki Shikibu (11th century), in addition the story of Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. See ‘kishu-ryūritan’ in *Kōjien*, p. 575.

³⁴⁵ *Daijisen*, p. 1033 and Teraki 1991, p. 66-67.

which recalls the *Saika shū*. Ryūzō's declaration of Magoichi as his ancestor is scornfully dismissed as 'a complete fiction' by the community. For Akiyuki, however, Ryūzō's re-invention of his origin initially suggests the triumph of the father by making the older man unbeatable. Yet as the *Kareki nada* narrative progresses, Akiyuki realises that he can overcome his father by seizing the narrative of Magoichi for himself away from his father. The scene from *Chi no hate* cited above suggests that by the opening of that narrative Akiyuki's intentions have been realised. However, given that Ryūzō voluntarily inverts the genealogical order by seeking to refer to his son as 'father,' 'brother' and 'Magoichi,' we might argue that Akiyuki's overthrow of Ryūzō is as yet only partial.

After the dialogue with Akiyuki, Ryūzō has an exchange with Fusa during which he informs her of his interchangeable relationship with his son.

'Hey Ryūzō, you traitor, come on here and tell me that you want your child!' Fusa shouted.

'No, no, Fusa, Akiyuki's not my child. He's my father. You should know that, Fusa. Because Akiyuki's my father, I've mended my ways and no longer corrupt myself with gambling.'

'Don't talk nonsense,' Fusa told him as if she herself was the gambler [...].³⁴⁶

This is a declaration, announced by Ryūzō who has previously been exiled from his common law wife's matrilineal family, of Akiyuki's isolation from Fusa. For Ryūzō, the *roji* matriarchy must be overthrown because it is incompatible with his ambition to be the hegemon that rules over both the conventional society and the underworld. Ryūzō consolidates this hegemony through naming the illegitimate son, Akiyuki, as a successor to the leadership of the underworld Hamamura gang while the legitimate eldest son, Yūichi, is the heir to the patriarchal Hamamura

³⁴⁶ NKZ 6, p. 56.

family. Although they are a regular presence in the first two volumes of the trilogy, Fusa and her daughter Mie appear only infrequently in *Chi no hate*. Ultimately, with the dismantlement of their narrative ground – the *roji* – by the husbands with whom each has established a conventional patriarchal family, the matriarch and her successor have become powerless.

Invalidated Father

With the emergence of the inverted relationship between the father and son, the meaning of patricide is invalidated. Karatani defines patricide as the modern desire to overcome the older generation in order to advance. Possessing a father to overcome is to become a ‘subject’ who internalises ‘repression by the father.’ Karatani further argues that modernity is ‘the world which is dominated by the Oedipal theme’ and that *kindai shōsetsu* (modern novels) must necessarily deal with that theme.³⁴⁷ While the concept of patricide in ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada* is clearly an Oedipal one, the invalidation of the patricidal narrative in *Chi no hate* can be considered as the ‘deconstruction’ of the grand patriarchal narrative of modernity. Asada supports Karatani’s reading that *Chi no hate* is a representation of the postmodern world which invalidates (deconstructs) the modern narratives of patricidal conflict which appear in ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada*.³⁴⁸

I would argue that *Chi no hate* is a novel that operates by means of what Spivak refers to as the ‘deconstructive figure,’³⁴⁹ which I understand as the strategy of deconstruction.

³⁴⁷ Karatani 2006, p. 175.

³⁴⁸ See Asada 1996, p. 30 and Karatani 2006, p. 174-176.

³⁴⁹ Spivak 1999, p. 98.

Spivak refers to Barthes' 1968 essay, 'Death of the Author,' as a work that is characterised by this deconstructive strategy. She cites the closing passage from the essay, which argues:

It is derisory to condemn the new writing in the name of a humanism hypocritically turned champion of the reader's right. [...] The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of Author.³⁵⁰

Spivak notes that this deconstructive strategy is one of 'complicity as well as (and therefore fully neither/nor) deicide-parricide,' that is, the elimination of neither god nor the father. Although Barthes' passage apparently carries the conviction of deicide-parricide, Spivak argues that, rather than heralding the literal death of any given individual author, the expression 'the death of the Author' is the former's deliberate 'choice' of using a metaphor that evokes Nietzsche's notion of the death of God.³⁵¹ Hasumi concurs with Spivak in that he, too, regards the notion of 'the death of the Author' as Barthes' attempt to 'thwart any hypocritical plots' that are produced by the 'in-vogue' discourse of the death of God. Hasumi in fact reads 'The Death of the Author' as Barthes' criticism of this 'anachronistic' ideological trend that randomly 'inflames' the perspective that we have no choice but to follow the narrative of the end of modernity.³⁵² Rather than – as some other critics have done – overly focussing on the deicide-parricide metaphor evoked by the expression 'the death of Author,' both Spivak and Hasumi read Barthes in a manner that emphasises the French writer's contestation of attributing a single meaning to a text. From this perspective, a notion such as deicide-parricide can have a range of possible meanings. For Spivak, in fact, 'No possible reading is a *mis*-reading.' This is because the 'challenge of deconstruction' is not to justify, but 'to suspend accusation to examine with painstaking care if

³⁵⁰ Spivak citing Roland Barthes' essay entitled 'The Death of the Author' (p. 148). See Spivak 1999, p. 98.

³⁵¹ Spivak 1999, p. 98.

³⁵² Hasumi 1985, p. 265.

the protocols of the text contains [*SIC*] a moment that can produce something that will generate a new and useful reading.’³⁵³

Drawing on Spivak’s passage, I read *Chi no hate* not as a narrative of patricide but as a narrative of the (im)possibility of (a narrative of) patricide. Unlike his abrupt desire to commit incest and fratricide as a substitute for patricide in the first two volumes of the trilogy, in *Chi no hate* Akiyuki’s patricidal desire is clearly focused on the destruction of the father, Ryūzō. The conventional father and son relationship is, however, already invalidated through the scene in the first chapter in which Ryūzō positively accepts Akiyuki’s inversion of their father and son bond. Borrowing from Spivak’s words, Akiyuki can be seen as a son who ‘suspends accusation’ of his father’s immoral paternal pattern of disruption and unproductiveness to examine whether or not the act of patricide – that is, the destruction of Ryūzō – ‘can produce something that will generate a new and useful reading’ of the emptiness of his homeland, the *roji*.³⁵⁴ Ultimately, however, this suspension of accusation is temporary and Akiyuki is unable to prevent himself from unleashing the full force of his rage against his father and even wanting to take his father’s life.

Living no better than a beggar, his [Ryūzō’s] grandfather had raged against the Arima villagers. This made Hamamura Ryūzō, who committed fraud and who manipulated financial records, cold and heartless [and so he was able to] dismantle the *roji* and strip clear the land. Akiyuki was aware of this. For Ryūzō there was no reason to do this – he was merely an ant building a nest. The one who thought about meaning was Akiyuki. Like a ghost of meaning, he thought that they should make the *roji* ownerless common land and share it with the people who lived there in the huts they had made. Akiyuki wanted to tell Satoko that this was his reason for wanting to kill Ryūzō, but he kept quiet thinking that Satoko could never understand his wildly abstract idea.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Spivak 1999, p. 98.

³⁵⁴ Spivak 1999, p. 98.

³⁵⁵ NKZ 6, p. 375.

Akiyuki's 'wildly abstract' idea of wanting to kill Ryūzō arises from the fact that the *roji* community, the motherland in which he once found his identity as 'an illegitimate child,' no longer exists. The agonised prolongation and indeterminacy of Akiyuki's 'patricide' results from the invalidation of his identity that is the result of his severing connections with the *roji*.

The End of Community

Chi no hate suggests that the end of the Father is – paradoxically – concurrent with the end of the *roji* and the motherland community. What is the end of community in the modern society? In the essay entitled, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, Zygmunt Bauman explains:

Since 'community' means shared understanding of the 'natural' and 'tacit' kind, it won't survive the moment in which understanding turns self-conscious, and so loud and vociferous; when, to use Heidegger's terminology again, understanding passes from the state of being 'zuhanden' to being 'vorhanden' and becomes an object for contemplation and scrutiny. Community can only be numb – or dead. Once it starts to praise its unique valour, wax lyrical about its pristine beauty and stick on nearby fences wordy manifestoes calling its members to appreciate its wonders and telling all the others to admire them or shut up – one can be sure that the community is no more (or not yet, as the case may be).³⁵⁶

Bauman's view can explain Nakagami's attachment to his homeland community expressed in the essay 'Shakkyō' (1980, also the title of a well-known *nō* play, meaning 'stone bridge'), one of a number of autobiographical writings and short stories featured in *Kumano shū*. 'Shakkyō' demonstrates that the 'author' (who is written as 'I' – *watashi* – apparently Nakagami) views the *roji* as a 'text' of the 'Dark Continent of language.'³⁵⁷ This essay also displays Nakagami's

³⁵⁶ Bauman 2001, p. 11-12.

³⁵⁷ NKZ 5, p. 282-283.

isolation from the community because of his need to articulate the significance of the *roji*. His assertion/celebration, yet mixed feeling of hatred towards the *roji* is never understood or accepted by his own family or peers in Kumano who see him as too self-conscious because of his own ‘inferiority complex.’³⁵⁸ Feeling irritated by the capitalist influenced views of the members of his community who never doubt the effacement of the *roji* as benefitting their peripheral society, the ‘author’ tries to ‘discover the *roji*’ and become, to use a phrase given by Faulkner in his map of Yoknapatawpha County, the ‘sole owner and proprietor’ of that site.

Chi no hate, published three years after ‘Shakkyō,’ can be interpreted as a novel which, in fact, demonstrates the ‘birth of the Author.’ A reader of the *roji*, Nakagami became an author of the *roji* through writing *Chi no hate*. In his 1983 interview with novelist, Kojima Nobuo, Nakagami commented, ‘[h]aving finished writing *Chi no hate shijō no toki*, I feel that I have for the first time written a *shōsetsu*.’³⁵⁹ Yet, while Yomota argues that *Chi no hate* was written because the *roji* was effaced, Watanabe reverses this view. According to Watanabe, *Chi no hate* was written through Nakagami’s establishment and possession of the *roji* as the last topos of narratives of the marginalised which have been passed down from generation to generation since ancient times.³⁶⁰

As discussed in the previous section, after the effacement of the *roji*, Nakagami’s so-called alter ego, Akiyuki, ‘discovers’ new meaning in this community. At the same time he is aware of the ambiguity of that community: the *roji* can be a place of ‘warmth’ for subalterns who include ‘dispirited and ghostly’ men with no pride or confidence and lustful women with their

³⁵⁸ NKZ 5, p. 274.

³⁵⁹ Nakagami and Kojima 1995, p. 265.

³⁶⁰ See Watanabe’s comment in his 1994 round-table discussion with Karatani, Asada, and Hasumi (Hasumi, Watanabe, Asada and Karatani 1994, p. 24).

illegitimate children. However, members of this subaltern community only welcome outsiders on the condition that newcomers are more ‘useless’ than themselves. While for Akiyuki the *roji* is a place of the ‘mother,’ for the outsider Ryūzō, who was excluded because he was ‘clever[er] and [more] vigorous [than the *roji* people],’ it is a hated place.³⁶¹ Drawing on Bauman’s view of ‘the Other’ in a community of ‘sameness,’ Ryūzō can be seen as the ‘alien’ who gives the community ‘the fear of uncertainty.’ Akiyuki does attempt to understand his father’s view of the *roji* community by seeking to understand the differing nature of the relationships of both himself and his father to the *roji*. Akiyuki’s insight into his father’s view could come only after the invalidation of their father and son conflict that resulted when this conflict lost its origin, the *roji*, in which the son once based himself in order to challenge his father.

‘Becoming a Burakumin’: The Voice of a Burakumin Man

Bauman discusses the relationship between community and identity, citing Jock Young’s observation that ‘Just as community collapses, identity is inverted.’³⁶² *Chi no hate* demonstrates how Akiyuki shifts his view of identity after the *roji* dismantlement, that is, after the invalidation of his self-identification as ‘an illegitimate child of the *roji*.’ In a passage that is significant for its references to the historical circumstances of *hisabetsu* people who were brutalised by the mainstream as a result of ‘impure’ occupations such as leather-tanning, Akiyuki’s ideas are clearly presented to the reader:

Although their voices were naturally alike, Akiyuki intentionally lowered his tone to sound even more like Ryūzō and said: ‘When I returned to this place from the prison, I walked

³⁶¹ NKZ 6, p. 313.

³⁶² Bauman 2001, p. 15.

round the *roji* crying. At that time I thought I could become anything. Walking and crying, I thought how, even though I would derogatorily be called *eta* [great filth] or *yotsu* [four] – I thought how I could become a man who tanned leather for a living in the muddy water of the lotus pond [...] or I could be a man who was crippled after being brutally beaten by a gang of lumbermen on New Year's day, only because, by mingling with the crowd of visitors of Hayatama Shrine, he accepted one of the rice cake pieces which those lumbermen were giving away to people. [...] So, I can even become Hamamura Magoichi, [...].

‘Ryūzō, Akiyuki, whom you thought of as your blood son [...] died at the same time that the *roji* was effaced. Of course I am alive and I am certainly a son of Hamamura Ryūzō who has inherited the blood of Hamamura Magoichi, but, I am more suitable to be a *yotsu* – nothing less than a beast – or a *jūichi* [eleven] which is one level worse than the Jews.’

363

This passage is the first time in the trilogy that Nakagami unambiguously depicts Akiyuki's background as associated with the outcaste context. This he does through the use of offensive terms such as *eta*, *yotsu* and *jūichi*. Before interpreting Akiyuki's view of identification, I will investigate these derogatory terms which refer to the Burakumin.

As previously noted, the Burakumin have been regarded by non-Burakumin as tainted by *kegare* (impurity). Prior to the modern era, the Burakumin were pejoratively called *eta* (great filth) or *hinin* (non-human) and these names are still often used as expressions of slander. Criminals and rebellious tenant farmers were also degraded as *hinin*. Because the essence of *kegare* includes treason and subversion of the social order, the leader of a riot, such as Suzuki/Hamamura Magoichi, can also be seen as a criminal stigmatised as *kegare*.

In Akiyuki's monologue, the term *yotsu* (四つ) is associated with four-legged beasts. Nakagami discusses the meaning of 'four' in his travel journal, *Kishū*:

³⁶³ NKZ 6, p. 176-177.

It is said that ‘four’ is pejorative. The most important reason why the number ‘four’ is a pejorative term is because it has been a derogatory name for the Burakumin. [...] Since, ‘four’ implies ‘four-legged beast’ and ‘death,’ it is abhorrent. This is certainly the case. For people who live within the conventions of civilised society, the bestial nature of man – the might of living things and the power of death – are abhorrently fearful. However, people cannot exist without the might of living beings and cannot ignore the power of death. ‘Four’ induces awe.³⁶⁴

The Burakumin have been stigmatised by the association with ‘four’ which implies death and association with animals. For the Japanese, ‘four’ is often ritually considered as an ominous number because the Chinese reading for ‘four’ (*shi*, 四) is a homophone for ‘death’ (*shi*, 死).³⁶⁵ Death as *kegare* has traditionally been held in both awe and abhorrence in Japan since ancient times. As noted earlier, discrimination against the Burakumin stems from the sense of both awe and abhorrence towards *kegare*, a sense that is still deeply rooted in the psyche of people today.

Since the English word, Jew, is a homophone for the Japanese term, *jū* (十), meaning ten, *jūichi* (十一, eleven) implies, as Akiyuki says, one (*ichi*, 一) level lower than the Jews. According to Yasuoka Shōtarō, the term was pronounced *toichi* and used by Japanese-Americans in Hawaii to refer to Burakumin in these communities.³⁶⁶ The foreign association of this term, which draws on a culture of denigration of people with a Jewish background, supports Nakagami and Karatani’s view that Ushimatsu (the Burakumin protagonist of Tōson’s 1906 novel, *Hakai*) will meet new discrimination in Texas where he fled to escape discrimination in Japan. In the same way that Jewish people were subjected to centuries of pogroms and other

³⁶⁴ NKZ 14, p. 672.

³⁶⁵ Also see Margherita Long’s discussion on ‘death’ and ‘four’ in Japanese language in her 2006 essay entitled ‘Nakagami and the Denial of Lineage: On Maternity, Abjection, and the Japanese Outcast Class.’ (Long 2006, p. 2)

³⁶⁶ Nakagami, Minakami and Yasuoka 1999, p. 105.

brutal behaviours that culminated in the Holocaust, the Burakumin too will become a target of discrimination by the mainstream in America.

Drawing on Karatani's remark that 'Japanese people are thoroughly discriminated against in America and the Burakumin [in America] are discriminated against by those Japanese people,' Nakagami notes that this is because *hisabetsu sha* (people who are discriminated against) are also *sabetsu sha* (people who themselves discriminate).³⁶⁷ Based on Nakagami's view, I interpret Akiyuki's claim that he '[can] become anything' as his desire to become nothing, which is neither *hisabetsu sha* nor *sabetsu sha*. This paradoxical perspective is able to subvert the entrenched reason for discrimination against the Burakumin. Nakagami's attitude of 'becoming a Burakumin' can be understood in this context – through this manner, he identifies himself as a Burakumin writer who gives representation to the voice of the *mukoku* (voiceless) Burakumin. This he does without becoming a *sabetsu sha* who endorses the discriminatory mainstream thought that can re-create the oppressed subject, or a self-marginalising or self-consolidating *hisabetsu sha* informant.

The Father's Obsession for Unbeatable Paternity

Ryūzō, on the other hand, who identifies with the great ancestor, Magoichi, and who insists that both he and his son are descendants of Magoichi, is both *hisabetsu sha* and *sabetsu sha*. After the effacement of the *roji* community, Ryūzō becomes 'productive' in terms of establishing his own male community called the Hamamura gang. For him, the Hamamura gang is a counterpart of the *roji* community in that it is a community comprised of people who were

³⁶⁷ Nakagami and Karatani 2011, p. 49-51.

driven asunder by the hegemonic centre. Ryūzō responds to Akiyuki's words with the claim that 'You're not *jūichi*, but the head of the Hamamura gang.'³⁶⁸ Ryūzō needs his son to become Magoichi so that he can belong to *one* unbroken line of Magoichi genealogy. What Ryūzō desires is identity which Bauman explains as 'a surrogate of community,' that is, that of the 'natural home' which people imagine and desire as the 'cosy shelter of security and confidence.' Asserting that such a 'warm circle'³⁶⁹ is 'never available in our rapidly privatized and individualized, fast globalizing world,' Bauman explains that a life dedicated to a search for identity is 'full of sound and fury.' This is because the one who seeks a fixed identity must struggle day in and day out to 'keep aliens off the gates and to spy out and hunt down the turncoats in their own midst.'³⁷⁰ This is the struggle that Ryūzō faces in establishing a Magoichi genealogy and in forming the Hamamura gang.

In order to establish his own 'circle,' Ryūzō welcomes Akiyuki who killed his favourite son as 'another similarly afraid and anxious individual.' Ryūzō, however, does not trust Akiyuki. Yoshi, an old friend of Ryūzō and the leader of the homeless 'nomads' in the grassland *roji*, tells Akiyuki that 'he [Ryūzō] always hates men who are similar to him so that, although he would feel lonelier than anybody else if he didn't have you or me, he hates us.'³⁷¹ This is because his alleged Magoichi line and the Hamamura gang were, after all, the result of his strong obsession with and aspiration for paternity. Moreover, Ryūzō displays his position as patriarch through exacerbating the tensions that exist between the legitimate eldest son Yūichi, heir to

³⁶⁸ NKZ 6, p. 177.

³⁶⁹ Bauman cites Göran Rosenberg's concept of the 'warm circle' as a concept to explain 'the naïve immersion in human togetherness': 'Human loyalties, offered and matter-of-factly expected inside the "warm circle," "are not derived from external social logic, or from any economic cost-benefit analysis." This is exactly what makes that circle "warm": it has no room for cold calculation and rota-learning of whatever society around, frostily and humourlessly, presents as "standing to reason."' See Bauman 2001, p. 10.

³⁷⁰ Bauman 2001, p. 16-17.

³⁷¹ NKZ 6, p. 198.

Ryūzō's patriarchal family, and the illegitimate son Akiyuki, successor of the underworld Hamamura gang. But in spite of his desires for the future of these young men, Ryūzō actually remains as the father and the object of patricidal desire by the son(s). For Ryūzō, invalidating his own position as the father by identifying himself as Akiyuki's son or brother is in fact nothing more than a strategy to establish himself as unbeatable by his son. Ultimately, Akiyuki indeed remains as the son. Karatani argues, in fact, that Akiyuki is the son of 'inertia',³⁷² who is locked into an Oedipal challenge against the father even though the significance of that conflict is already invalidated.

Self-disruption of the Father

What is the patricide of 'inertia' depicted in *Chi no hate* – the world after the invalidation of the Oedipal concept? In the last chapter of the novel, Ryūzō commits suicide after his old friend, Yoshi, is shot dead by his own son who had intended, in fact, to kill Ryūzō. The passage below is the scene in which Ryūzō, having waited to make a spectacle of his death before Akiyuki, hangs himself in the full view of his son. The extract below dramatically conveys Akiyuki's panic in the face of his awareness that his father is about to take his own life and the conflict which grips him regarding whether or not he should intervene.

Morning had broken and from the glare outside, the shadow [Ryūzō] could see Akiyuki standing in his work clothes in the reception room. Realising this, Akiyuki became flustered. I don't want to call him, I mustn't call him, but, I must stop him, I must keep him back here where I am. In his distress Akiyuki thought, what on earth am I for the shadow, what is the shadow for me? At that point, he found his voice and shouted. At the same time,

³⁷² Karatani 2006, p. 175.

the shadow, which stretched as if suspended in air, shook violently and, as the chair fell, dropped with a thud. 'It's wrong,' Akiyuki shouted as if it was the only word he knew.³⁷³

This suicide is an enigma for Akiyuki. Yomota reads Akiyuki's word 'It's wrong' (*chigau*) as the ultimate demonstration by the son of a refusal to repeat the father's narrative.³⁷⁴ Karatani, on the other hand, interprets this as an outward show of Akiyuki's confusion and anger towards the enigmatic self-destruction of the unbeatable father. Karatani further argues that this shout is Nakagami's representation of the end of modernity.³⁷⁵ Akiyuki's exclamation can further be read as a cry of anguish towards the postmodern world where we can no longer rely on modern grand narratives such as the father, family, community or history.

With the deaths of Ryūzō and Yoshi, the leader of the nomads who camped in the grassland *roji* to disrupt the urban planning of the area, Akiyuki thinks that 'the *roji* has now clearly disappeared. The bond between parents and children has also been broken, as well as the bond between the mother, the sisters and their only surviving boy.'³⁷⁶ Here, Akiyuki clearly sees that the project to build a shopping centre, which his own family has largely driven, will completely efface the grassland *roji*. At the end of *Chi no hate*, the grassland goes up in flames. It is rumoured that the fire was set by Akiyuki who leaves the area without telling anyone.

Akiyuki's departure from the lost origin suggests that he will find a new life as an origin-less nomad. Prior to his death, Yoshi had welcomed Akiyuki as 'Genghis Khan,' a reference to the leader of the Mongol nomad tribes. Yoshi goes on to explain the nomad life: 'We're easygoing,' he notes. 'We don't need a house or anything. Even these camps we recently built by collecting all the wood ourselves. If we're told to go away, we'll just go somewhere

³⁷³ NKZ 6, p. 415-416.

³⁷⁴ Yomota 1996, p. 159-185.

³⁷⁵ Karatani 2006, p. 169-170 and 175.

³⁷⁶ NKZ 6, p. 449.

else.³⁷⁷ As Asada notes, Nakagami's depiction of the nomad recalls the post-modern concepts of 'nomadism' and 'deterritorialisation' in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).³⁷⁸ This re-worked concept of the nomad is particularly relevant for Akiyuki who chooses to 'become anything' in order to overcome the oppressiveness of the modern patriarchal ideology of family and community. Akiyuki's setting the fire was not motivated by an obsessive concern with identity or territorial boundaries similar to that of his father. Rather, his setting the fire implies that Akiyuki cuts his connection with the cyclic repetition of subaltern narratives through which the *roji* has been established. In this sense, Akiyuki does not repeat his father's narrative.

Akiyuki's departure from the *roji*, on the other hand, implies the unavoidable repetition of his father's narrative in terms of separation from the son. Interestingly, like the young Ryūzō, in *Chi no hate* Akiyuki becomes sexually promiscuous. In 'Misaki' the protagonist was a virgin while in *Kareki nada* Akiyuki had a steady lover, Noriko, who lived outside the *roji* community. In *Chi no hate*, Noriko, however, has become wife to a man who takes over her father's business. She is also the mother of a three-year-old son whose father is actually Akiyuki. In his relationship with Noriko, Akiyuki cannot avoid repeating the narrative of the fatherless son of the matrilineal family. Taking her son, Noriko leaves her husband for Akiyuki. Although Akiyuki loves Noriko, he continues to live alone, occasionally visiting the apartment of Noriko and her son. This implies Akiyuki's desire to remain as a 'man who refuses to be a patriarch.' Such an attitude is in contrast to Ryūzō who retains both a patriarchal family and an underworld gang. Akiyuki's departure from his hometown nevertheless can be recognised, like Ryūzō's death, as the 'self-disruption of the father' towards his own son to whom Noriko

³⁷⁷ NKZ 6, p. 48.

³⁷⁸ Asada 1996, p. 31. Also see discussion of concepts of 'nomadism' and 'deterritorialisation' in Deleuze and Guattari 2004.

gave birth. Because the depiction of Noriko's psychology is relatively limited we never exactly know her thoughts about her new life as a single mother or her lover's 'nomadism.' For Akiyuki, Noriko is merely a manifestation of feminine sexuality that reflects his interiority. She provides him with a concrete identity as lover, common-law-husband, and father of a son. This is similar to the depiction of many of the women in the Akiyuki trilogy, a depiction that will be discussed in greater detail in the next two chapters.

For Akiyuki, both family and community – whether subaltern or mainstream – are exclusionist units whose members are obsessed with their origin or narrative of identity. In order to keep the unity of this narrative, those who deviate must always be exiled. Thus, *Chi no hate* is a work which depicts the reoccurrence of the exclusionary concept of identity while also demonstrating a way of overcoming this through depicting a hero who voluntarily invalidates his own identity by becoming anything he can, that is, by becoming nothing.

This chapter has focussed on *Chi no hate*, the final book in the Akiyuki trilogy which, unlike the first two volumes, was clearly written as a narrative of the Burakumin experience. This was especially apparent through references to derogatory Burakumin terms related to the concept of *kegare* which has justified discrimination against the Burakumin throughout various eras. My analyses of *Chi no hate*, grounded in an understanding of the first two narratives of the Akiyuki trilogy and in an understanding of Nakagami's discourse of narrative, focussed on the depiction of Ryūzō and Akiyuki as a Burakumin father and son whose interchangeable relationship marks the invalidation of hegemonic patriarchal norms. Nakagami's Burakumin male protagonist was ambiguously characterised as introspective yet thoughtless, composed yet nervous, and individual yet communal. By representing both the resilience and vulnerability of

the Burakumin man and by giving voice to this man's declaration to become 'nothing,' Nakagami provides a radical means of identification without either entrenching discrimination against the Burakumin or creating new subalterns.

Chapter Four

Voice of an Incestuous Sister

An Incestuous Sister Satoko

The aim of this chapter is to provide a close examination of Nakagami's representation of the oppressed voice of the sister (*imōto*) who has an incestuous relationship with her older brother (*ani*). While Akiyuki's patricidal activities have received a great deal of scholarly attention, little interest has been shown in the narrative of his younger half-sister, Satoko, whose sexuality is exploited by the half-brother as a strategic weapon in the young man's bitter conflict with the father.³⁷⁹ In the previous chapter, we noted how Akiyuki's relationship of rivalry with his father was marked by attributes that were both Oedipal and homosexual. This chapter will draw on notions of male 'homosocial' desire developed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick to discuss how the sister, Satoko, is presented in the narrative as a mere object for the brother, Akiyuki, to confirm and enhance his bond with the father, Ryūzō.

The incest narrative of Akiyuki and Satoko that is depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy echoes *Kyōdai shinjū* (*A Brother and Sister Double Suicide*), a folksong drawn from the rich oral history of the Kasuga Burakumin district. In this chapter I will provide a reading of this folksong, drawing on 'Imo no chikara' (1925, *The Power of Woman*), an essay by Yanagita Kunio (1875-

³⁷⁹ As noted in the Introduction, although in both Japanese and English scholarship, there is frequent discussion of Akiyuki's breaking the incest taboo as a substitute for patricide, little attention has been given to Satoko's vulnerability and consciousness of the incest. In the critique of Nakagami's works either as complicit in or challenging masculinist activities and ideologies, his narratives are essentially regarded as representations of the male voice. This approach regards women characters such as Satoko as merely a mirror for critics to use to look into the interiority of Nakagami's male characters.

1962), a key folklorist thinker in modern Japan, and also on *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, the 2000 book by Judith Butler. In doing so, I will analyse the sister (*imōto*) represented in the ballad as, to borrow Spivak's term, 'the sexed subaltern subject' who has 'no space' to speak in modern patriarchal society.

A Critique of Ambivalent Masculinist Interpretations of Nakagami

As discussed in Chapter Two, the discourse of ambivalence constructed by Japanese male critics such as Asada, Watanabe, Karatani, and Hasumi in relation to Nakagami's depiction of violence against women has been valorised as the most influential hegemonic (male) reading of this aspect of Nakagami's work. In addition to the term 'ambivalent,' expressions such as 'bisexual' (*ryōsei teki*), 'androgynous' (*ryōsei guyū teki*), or 'bilineal' (*sōsei teki*)³⁸⁰ are also frequently used by these scholars when discussing the violence against women that is a feature of many of Nakagami's narratives. Feminist scholars, of course, read Nakagami's writing as a highly gendered and phallocentric representation of heterosexual relations.³⁸¹ This has led to criticism from male scholars with the words of Asada Akira, cited below, typical of the backlash against feminist readings of Nakagami's work.

[In Nakagami's narrative], sexual intercourse between a man and woman is always depicted with this ambivalence. In 'Misaki,' for example, although Akiyuki rapes his half-sister, he is a virgin while his half-sister is an experienced prostitute. Moreover [...] immediately after the couple first have sex, the woman climbs on top of the man again in an attempt to arouse him. [...] While some scenes are graphic depictions of what appears to be a man raping a woman, most sex scenes in Nakagami Kenji's narratives occur from

³⁸⁰ Hasumi, Watanabe, Asada and Karatani 1994, p. 30-38.

³⁸¹ For example, see Zimmerman's comment in her 1993 round-table discussion with Karatani, Suga, Yomota and Watanabe (Karatani et al. 2000, p. 197 and 199).

initiatives taken by women. I must say that those who are critical of Nakagami's depiction of sexual violence against women demonstrate a stunning lack of interpretative ability when they fail to acknowledge this point.³⁸²

In a continuation of this deeply problematic statement which can imply that there should be no condemnation of men who rape women who take the initiative in sex, Asada refers to a 'stunning lack of interpretative ability' of Nakagami's depiction of sexual violence; he labels this a 'feminist misreading' (*feminisuto no gokai*).³⁸³ The feminists whom he targets are identified only vaguely but seem to include so-called 'radical' feminists who, it is claimed, take gender alone to be the single essential and universal division of human experience. However, rather than elucidating any real failure in a feminist approach, the excerpt cited above merely reveals Asada's limited understanding of feminist analysis, particularly the fact that there are a number of prominent feminists who give positive readings of some aspects of Nakagami's depiction of women and sex. Ueno Chizuko, one of Japan's ground-breaking contemporary feminist scholars, for example, refers to the heroines of *Hosenka* (1980, *Touch-me-not*), and 'Sekihatsu' (1979, *Red Hair*) as typical Nakagami women characters who 'always maintain their subjectivity in sex' and 'make decisions through their bodies', that is, by means of their sexuality.³⁸⁴

The work of Livia Monnet makes clear how the discourse of Japanese male Nakagami critics forecloses the very possibility of feminist intervention in debates around Nakagami's narratives. Monnet strongly criticises the tendency of these males to 'literally' read and conflate as one single 'ambivalence' the many varied expressions of gender, sex and sexuality found in the writer's texts. She associates this with the dogmatic 'legislation' of correct readings made by these males during the 'Nakagami Boom' that occurred immediately after the

³⁸² Hasumi, Watanabe, Asada and Karatani 1994, p. 32.

³⁸³ Asada, Okuizumi, Karatani and Watanabe 2000, p. 235.

³⁸⁴ Ueno 2006, p. 19.

writer's death in 1992 and which saw the canonisation of certain Nakagami narratives. Revealing the fear of 'gender trouble'³⁸⁵ implicit in the readings given by these critics, Monnet provides a feminist-deconstructionist analysis of a number of Nakagami's short stories including 'Fushi' (1980, *The Immortal*) and 'Jūryoku no miyako' (1988, *The Capital of Gravity*). Monnet reads these two works as drawing on a 'gender-sexuality-violence' nexus in order to express hegemonic masculinist (and also in her view highly pornographic) fantasies of marginalised women as the 'uncanny' and 'abject.' At the same time, however, Monnet appreciates these stories as works which demonstrate the postmodern 'parodic' technique of rewriting and subverting the grounds of masculinist textual politics.³⁸⁶ Following Monnet, Cornyetz criticises these male scholars' assertion of Nakagami's depiction of rape as representation of 'ambivalence' as an 'ambivalent masculinist politics.'

[A]n ambivalent masculinist politics has informed the canonization of Nakagami's work, because *any* celebration of Nakagami's work must accept an assault on gender constructs and indicates a willingness on the part of the reader to undergo a breakdown of conventional gendered discourses and phallic dominance.³⁸⁷

While concurring with the interpretation by Japanese male critics of Nakagami as a writer who deconstructs hegemonic constructs of gender, both Monnet and Cornyetz nevertheless question the masculinist reading of Nakagami's work that has emerged from the 'homosocial' processes in which these critics have engaged in their push to have their ideas accepted by other readers.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Monnet 1996a, p. 15. Monnet references Judith Butler's essay *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990).

³⁸⁶ For further detail, see Monnet 1996a and 1996b.

³⁸⁷ Cornyetz 1999, p. 208-209.

³⁸⁸ While they may, however, disagree with the canon established by Japanese male scholars, the fact that Monnet and Cornyetz were invited by Karatani and Asada to publish essays in the journal *Hihyō kūkan* (*Critical Space*) was a sign that by the late 1990s male scholars were at least open to dialogue with feminist scholars and their critiques.

Rather than developing an argument around the general question of the ambivalent masculinist politics of Japanese male scholars, I will work through my own specific questions related to the Akiyuki trilogy that arise from Asada's statement. These questions include: Can Satoko really be seen to take the 'initiative' when having incestuous sex with her half-brother, Akiyuki? Can we ever comprehend the incestuous sister's voice by drawing on a logic of male 'ambivalence'?

Asada's reading of 'Misaki' repeatedly makes the claim that Satoko is depicted as an experienced sex worker who gives the sexual lead to the virginal Akiyuki. This critic insists that the power (subjectivity and initiative) of the sister who initiates sex with her half-brother confirms the 'ambivalent' sense of their incestuous relationship. While Asada 'literally' reads Satoko's taking the initiative as her 'private' pleasure which permits her to 'enjoy the young body of an inexperienced man,'³⁸⁹ I interpret it as her 'Speech Act,' her 'socially valid verbal action'³⁹⁰ to demonstrate her social – or 'public' to borrow Mizuta's term – role as a prostitute. Since Akiyuki is a newcomer to her brothel, Satoko is obligated to make the new client comfortable. Thus, rather than a strategy to seek her own pleasure, Satoko's initiating sex with Akiyuki is better understood as a duty associated with her paid work. Furthermore, although she apparently voluntarily commodifies her sex in order to support herself and her retired prostitute mother, Satoko has no way of knowing that this new first-time client is actually her half-brother and is therefore absolutely powerless as a subject to agree to having incestuous sex. Unlike the resisting wife in 'Rakudo,' Satoko has no chance to say 'no' to her brother's desire to engage in sex. Neither does she have any way of knowing that she is committing incest.

³⁸⁹ Asada, Okuizumi, Karatani and Watanabe 2000, p. 236.

³⁹⁰ Austin 1962, p. 45-52.

As previously noted, Akiyuki is oppressed by being an object of the father's 'gaze.' He is contradictorily depicted as a young virile man of strong frame but at the same time a feminised subject. His incest with his half-sister is motivated by his desire to gain the subjective agency necessary to break the frustrating line of his father's gaze. There is ambivalence, nonetheless, in this desire in the sense that, as is apparent below, he shifts between wishing to be an aggressor and a victim.

He would commit one terrible crime and get revenge on the man. No, he'd rather be the victim of a terrible crime himself.³⁹¹

The 'terrible crime' referred to here is his incest with the unknowing Satoko. Given that this is the case, Akiyuki's act of incest can ultimately be seen as a rape in terms of a young man's exploitation of a woman's sexuality in order to overcome the frustration he feels in the face of paternal authority. From this perspective, rather than ambivalent, both Nakagami's mode of representation and the interpretation of Akiyuki's incest given by Japanese male intellectuals appear deeply masculinist-coloured.

In the act of brother-sister incest depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy, the partner who 'ambivalently' confuses duty and pleasure is not, as Asada claims, Satoko. Rather it is Akiyuki. The scene in which the couple have sex makes it very clear that for Akiyuki committing incest is a way to negate and degrade the father, the parent they have in common.

This woman was definitely his younger sister, he thought. Their hearts were beating hard. How I've longed for you, [*itoshii, itoshii*]³⁹² their hearts were saying to each other. With his ass in the air like an animal, he didn't know what to do even though she meant so very much [*itoshii*]³⁹³ to him. He wanted to pluck out his beating heart and press it into her

³⁹¹ Nakagami 1999b, p. 87.

³⁹² NKZ 3, p. 242.

³⁹³ NKZ 3, p. 242.

breast, merge their two hearts, rub them one against the other. The woman moaned. Their sweat flowed. I'm your brother. We two are the pure children of that man, the one I can now call 'Father' for the first time. If only we had hearts for sex organs. Akiyuki wanted to rip open his chest, and show his sister, her eyes closing as she strained and moaned, the blood of that man running through his veins. From that day on he would smell like an animal. [...] Off in the distance he could hear somebody, perhaps a drunk, yelling. The woman cried out, her eyes tightly shut, as if she couldn't take any more. Beads of sweat stuck to her eyelids like tears. Now, he thought, that man's blood will spill over.³⁹⁴

This scene depicts three different but intertwined unities which Akiyuki imagines: firstly the unity of the half-brother and half-sister, secondly the unity of the children and their father, and finally the unity of the father and son. In Akiyuki's fantasised unity with his half-sister, the significance of incestuous sex, that is, the physical unity that results through the couple merging their sex organs, becomes the emotional integration symbolised by the merging of their two hearts which feel longing (*itoshisa*) for each other. Feeling a strong sense of affection for the woman he embraces, Akiyuki also senses the blood relations that tie the father and his children and is thus able to recognise 'the man' as his father for the first time. At the climax of the sex act, recalling the merging of the identity of the father and son discussed in the previous chapter, Akiyuki even envisions that he ejaculates his father's blood.

In terms of Nakagami's depiction of this sex scene, I agree with the celebration by Japanese woman writer, Matsu'ura Eriko (b. 1958), of Nakagami as a writer who gives a 'graceful' depiction of the sex act and sexual desire that is inseparable from a surge of feelings that include both affection and fear. Matsu'ura's insightful interpretation of Akiyuki's sex organ as a penis that both 'ejaculates with *itoshisa*' and that 'transforms into a heart' is a much more effective means of explaining the 'ambivalence' inherent in this sex scene than the assumption made by male critics of Satoko's lust. I also concur with Matsu'ura's remark that Nakagami's

³⁹⁴ Nakagami 1999b, p. 90-91.

‘honest’ and ‘fair-minded’ depiction can be seen even in his ‘scenes of self-centred, violent sex by males against women.’³⁹⁵ I would argue that Matsu’ura’s view, which sees an effective gender critique in the writer’s ‘honest’ depiction of the interiority of violent men, closely parallels Mizuta’s reading of the I-novels of the Japanese male writer.

Matsu’ura also argues that there is no representation in any of Nakagami’s narratives which justifies male violence against women. Her view supports a reading of the Akiyuki trilogy as a text that reveals the ideological and physical violence that prevails in a phallogentric society. This view, however, must not be rationalised simply by Asada’s claim of Nakagami’s depiction of brother-sister sex as ‘ambivalence’ through an emphasis on the prostitute Satoko’s taking the ‘initiative.’ As previously noted, while Satoko may have been able to choose to have sex, she lacked the knowledge to choose to engage in incest as a subjective agent. I read this incest narrative as Nakagami’s representation of a brother’s justification of exploitation of his prostitute sister’s sexuality to support an Oedipal challenge that conceals a ‘homosocial’ desire to confirm and cement his bond with the father.

Male Homosocial Desire and the Traffic in Women

As noted in Chapter Three, while Akiyuki desires both an Oedipal and hidden homosexual kinship bond with Ryūzō, Ryūzō seeks to have Akiyuki bond with gangsters. Nevertheless, the desire of both men can be seen as homosocial. I will begin by exploring the perspective of ‘homosociality’ with reference to *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) and *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) by Eve Sedgwick who is

³⁹⁵ Matsu’ura 1995, p. 4-5.

recognised as a ground-breaking theorist in the field of queer studies. In these essays, Sedgwick provides a powerful lens which permits us to view patriarchal society as a sphere controlled by male homosociality. Unlike homosexual relationships which are characterised by sexual attraction and activities between people of the same sex, homosocial relationships refer to the bond between members of the same sex, typically men, based on their desire to establish (apparently) nonsexual friendship and brotherhood with each other. We should note that homosociality also involves antagonism between male rivals.

For her interpretation of the male homosocial triangle in English literature, Sedgwick refers to René Girard's discussion on 'erotic triangles.' Girard argues that an erotic triangle in which two men contend for a woman's love may actually disguise the rivalry that operates in an attraction between the men. In such a triangle, the woman is merely an object mediating male desire. Each man confirms himself as a desiring subject through desiring, that is, objectifying, a woman who is in turn desired – objectified – by his rival. The bond between rivals in an erotic triangle is 'even stronger, more heavily determinant of actions and choices, than anything in the bond between either of the [competing] lovers and the beloved.'³⁹⁶ Also referring to Gayle Rubin's criticism of patriarchal heterosexuality and Claude Lévi-Strauss' view of marriage, Sedgwick sees the bond between such men as based on what she terms the 'traffic in women.' Sedgwick defines the traffic of women as the 'use of women as changeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men.'³⁹⁷ She further observes that the structure of the 'bonds of men with men' consists of three aspects: homosocial desire, misogyny and homophobia. Homosocial desire is desire exercised by an individual male to establish a male bond with other men in order to identify and demonstrate himself as a 'man,'

³⁹⁶ Sedgwick 1992, p. 21.

³⁹⁷ Sedgwick 1992, p. 25-26.

that is, as an active member in a male-dominated society. In the male bond, women become the object of men's desire and are alienated as the other through the traffic in women. This is the process of misogyny. This traffic in women is necessary in order to maintain and demonstrate the fact that heterosexual desire is essential in the homosocial circle. These homosocial men therefore internalise homophobia and strictly forbid themselves involvement in any homosexual act.

Nakagami's depiction of Satoko is a classic representation of a female subject who becomes the object of rivalry between two men in the manner of Sedgwick's male-male-female homosocial triangle. For Ryūzō, Satoko is a daughter who, according to community rumour, is also her father's mistress. For Akiyuki, she is the half-sister with whom he has had actual incestuous sex. The Oedipal conflict between father and son is played out as two men fighting over a woman's sexuality. The relationship of this father and son is characterised by a misogyny that alienates Satoko as the sexed Other. This is apparent in Ryūzō's private dialogue with Akiyuki which judges Satoko as 'useless' because 'women are just for men to sleep with.' While admitting that he is helplessly attracted to women, in his mind Akiyuki agrees with Ryūzō thinking that 'women are merely sexual organs.'³⁹⁸ As the target of both Ryūzō and Akiyuki's misogynistic desire, Satoko is an essential medium for the father and son to confirm and enhance their bond. Drawing on Mizuta's view discussed in Chapter Two, Ryūzō and Akiyuki's homosocial desire can be explained as a 'discourse of men' which is represented through the woman's sexuality.

In *Between Men* and *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick hypothesises that homosocial desire is 'potentially erotic' and accordingly investigates 'the potential unbrokenness

³⁹⁸ NKZ 3, p. 393.

of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual.’³⁹⁹ In the previous chapter, we discussed Akiyuki’s hidden homosexual desire for Ryūzō in the context of the Oedipal complex that, to borrow Butler’s explanation, affects gender identification not only through the incest taboo, but, prior to that, through the taboo against homosexuality. Akiyuki’s vision, cited in the previous section of this chapter, of unity with his father during incestuous sex with Satoko, can also be read as an expression of the homosexual desire that is embedded in the male bond.

The ‘continuum between homosocial and homosexual’ can also be seen in Akiyuki’s fratricide of his younger half-brother, Hideo.

It [the fratricide] happened abruptly. In the distance that separated them, there were only two possibilities – a caress or violence. Even from a metre away, the outline of each body was ambiguous in the dusk.⁴⁰⁰

As noted in the previous chapter, the fratricide is depicted through an image of the violent sexual assault of a woman, that is, incest committed by the older brother against the younger brother. In this scene, Hideo’s depiction as a feminised object also implies his position as a woman whose role is to project Akiyuki’s hidden homosocial/homosexual desire for Ryūzō. Like his incest, Akiyuki’s fratricide consequently brings himself and the father closer together than ever. This is confirmed in the last volume of the trilogy when we see Akiyuki voluntarily approaching Ryūzō to take part in the latter’s business ventures and underworld gangs.

Satoko, on the other hand, becomes ‘useless’ as the female party in the homosocial triangle with Akiyuki and Ryūzō. Satoko is initially an essential medium in the construction of the bond between her father and brother. However, once she is judged as ‘useless’ by these men,

³⁹⁹ Sedgwick 1992, p. 1.

⁴⁰⁰ NKZ 3, p. 452.

her position in the triangle is replaced by Hideo. Both Satoko and Hideo are (incestuously) raped by their older half-brother, Akiyuki. While Hideo dies during this metaphoric rape, Satoko survives the actual act of incest. In other words, while the younger brother (*otōto*) is erased from the Oedipal/homosocial narrative of his father and brother, in spite of being stigmatised as ‘useless’ Satoko, (the *imōto*) remains alive to tell her own narrative of the incestuous sister.

***Kyōdai shinjū*: A Ballad of Brother and Sister Double Suicide**

What is the difference that sees Satoko live while Hideo dies? I will consider the answer through reading *Kyōdai shinjū* which is an oral Burakumin narrative from Kasuga. The family tragedies and the characters depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy echo local folklore that tells of the riotous subversion of morality (*ikki*) by the rebellious samurai, Magoichi, discussed in the previous chapter, and of the double suicide (*kyōdai shinjū*) of an incestuous brother and sister. For my analysis of Nakagami’s depiction of the Burakumin woman’s voice, it is useful to investigate the historical context of the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad in addition to Nakagami’s unique interpretation of this work. I will also present my own interpretation of the ballad to illustrate the significance of the *imōto* (sister) in modern Japanese society.

Until the 1970s, the *Kyōdai shinjū* folksong was sung and led mostly by local women during the *bon* festival in the Kasuga *buraku*.⁴⁰¹ In his essay ‘Fūkei no mukō e: Kankoku no tabi’ (1983, Beyond Scenery: A Trip to Korea), Nakagami explains his use of *Kyōdai shinjū* in *Kareki nada*:

⁴⁰¹ Zimmerman 2007, p. 86.

Although I was unaware while I was writing, I regard *Kareki nada* as a novel that breaks the secret code of the *Kyōdai shinjū* dance ballad. I myself probably comprehend the *Kareki nada* narrative through interpreting the *Kyōdai shinjū* text.⁴⁰²

In summary, the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad gives an account of a brother, Monten, who lives in Kyoto and who falls in love with and wastes away pining for his sister, Okiyo. Although initially shocked when she learns of her brother's love, Okiyo eventually agrees to sleep with her brother on the condition that he kills her husband who is a *komonso* (formally *komusō*), a mendicant monk. As revealed at the end of the ballad, the monk husband is Okiyo's fictive creation. The 'man' who is murdered by Monten is the sister, Okiyo, herself, dressed in the attire of a *komusō*. The death occurs in Gōshū (the traditional name of Shiga prefecture) on the Seta Bridge, which Nakagami sees as a metonym for the border between the centre, that is, life, and the periphery, that is, death.⁴⁰³ The song concludes with Monten committing suicide in Kyoto.⁴⁰⁴

While a full text of *Kyōdai shinjū* appears in *Kareki nada*, some elements in this version of the ballad are different from those in essays written by Nakagami, such as 'Fūkei no mukō e: Kankoku no tabi,' and 'Monogatari no keifu.' The version of the ballad cited in both those essays was audio-taped around 1978 by Nakagami who, after publishing *Kareki nada*, recorded a local Kasuga woman singing the text. In order to articulate the actual folkloric value of the ballad, my analysis below will draw on the version that Nakagami recorded.⁴⁰⁵ The words of the song are as follows:

⁴⁰² NKZ 15, p. 60.

⁴⁰³ NKZ 15, p. 216.

⁴⁰⁴ As noted in Chapter One, Kyoto was the ancient capital where the emperor, who was the symbol of *hare*, purity or glory, once lived. In this context, 'the hidden country,' Kumano, is juxtaposed against the centre of Japan, the political entity that operated under the brilliant auspices of the sun goddess.

⁴⁰⁵ The audio-taped version of *Kyōdai shinjū* is published in NKZ 15, p. 210-212. My English translation of *Kyōdai shinjū* written in *Kareki nada* is published in my essay entitled 'Nakagami Kenji's "Writing Back to the Centre" through the Subaltern Narrative: Reading the Hidden Outcaste Voice in "Misaki" and *Kareki nada*.' See Ishikawa

It is not often we hear of a brother and sister suicide	さても珍し 兄妹心中
The brother is twenty-one, the sister twenty	兄は二十一 妹は二十
Brother Monten adores his sister	兄のもんてん 妹にほれて
Pining for her, he then falls ill	それがつもりてご病気になりて
Eating two only of three daily meals	三度の食事も二度となる
Then two becomes one	二度の食事も一度となりて
So the mother visits her son	そこで母上見舞いに上る
How do you feel, my son?	これさ兄さんご病気はいかが
Should I call a doctor? Should I bring medicine?	医者を向かおか 介抱しよか
I need no doctor, nor medicine nor remedy	医者も薬も介抱もいらぬ
But if I could once see my sister Okiyo	一度会いたい妹のおきよ
So Okiyo comes to her brother's sick bed	そこでおきよが見舞に上る
How do you feel, my brother?	これさ兄さんご病気はいかが
Should I call a doctor? Should I bring medicine?	医者を向かおか 介抱しよか
I need no doctor, nor medicine nor remedy	医者も薬も介抱もいらぬ
A thousand nights with you would see me well	私の病気は千夜でなおる
If you refuse one thousand then I beg you for one	千夜いやなら一夜をたのむ
Hearing her brother, Okiyo is shocked	そこでおきよはびっくりいたし

Do you know, my brother, what it is that you ask?	これさ兄さん何言やしゃんす
You and I are brother and sister	私とあなたは兄妹なかよ
So people who heard this would call us beasts	人に聞かれちゃ犬畜生と
Our parents would disown us if they knew	親に聞かれちゃ勘当なさる
There is a woman somewhere to be your wife	兄に似合いし女房もござる
And a man to be my husband too	私に似合いし夫もござる
My husband is a mendicant monk	私の夫はこもんそ吹きよ
Aged nineteen, he is named Masao	年は十九でその名は正夫
If you kill Masao	正夫殺してくだしゃんしたら
For one night, two nights, or even for three	一夜二夜でも三夜でも
I will lie with you, my brother	添うてあげますこれ兄さんよ
Having spoken, Okiyo goes to a different room	言うておきよはひと間にさがり
Where she dresses her hair and makes-up her face	髪を結うたりお化粧したり
And then makes ready to dress	さあさこれから仕度にかかる
First a slip of white habutai silk	下に着るのは白はぶたいよ
Then a black habutai kimono	上に着るのは黒はぶたいよ
An everyday Hakata weave obi	帯は当世の筑前博多
Is wound twice around her leaving a three-shaku length ⁴⁰⁶	二回回して三尺残る

⁴⁰⁶ Three-shaku is approximately 91cm.

Fastening the obi's remnant three shaku	残る三尺きちやと締めて
She conceals her face with the monk's straw-basket hat	深い網笠面手にかぶり
Then playing her one-shaku-five-sun shakuhachi flute ⁴⁰⁷	一尺五寸の尺八笛を
She sets out across the Seta Bridge	瀬田の唐橋笛吹いて通る
Monten shoots at the form on the bridge	ワーとうったらうちおとしたら
As a shot rings out a woman screams	ワーと泣く声女の声
Oh, no! It's my sister, Okiyo	さあさ しもおた妹のおきよ
I have killed my sister and can no longer live	おきよ殺しちゃ生きてはおれぬ
The brother took his life beneath a Kyoto bridge	兄は京都の唐橋の下
It is not often we hear of a brother-sister suicide	さても珍し兄妹心中
I could sing other songs	私の音頭はまだまだあるが
But will leave you now ⁴⁰⁸	ここらあたりでおひまをもらう

Kyōdai shinjū is a variation of the *Gōshū ondo* which is the generic name given to a *bon* dance ballad with a particular rhythm and melody, variations of which are still sung in many areas of Japan today. *Gōshū ondo* takes its names from *Gōshū*, the old name for a region of Shiga, and the term *ondo* meaning a dance song. The words of *Gōshū ondo* vary from area to area and are generally modified to fit the local context. As Nakagami noted, however, *Kyōdai shinjū*, the *Gōshū ondo* of Kasuga, is *not* a song about Kasuga.⁴⁰⁹ When considering this non-characteristic element of the Kasuga *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad, it is useful to have some knowledge of the

⁴⁰⁷ One shaku, five sun is approximately 45.5cm. Shakuhachi is usually one shaku eight sun (about 54.5cm).

⁴⁰⁸ NKZ 15, p.210 - 212.

⁴⁰⁹ NKZ 15, p.212 - 213.

‘geopolitical’ relationship between Kasuga, Shingū, Gōshū and Kyoto. As previously noted, Kasuga was one of the *hisabetsu buraku* in Shingū. Shingū is a central city of the Kumano region, an area isolated from the ancient capital by forests and mountains. Gōshū is a province that borders both Kyoto in the north and Kumano in the south and is traditionally known as a commercial area with a good water supply from Lake Biwa.

***Kyōdai shinjū* and Mill Girls (*Jokō*)**

Any interpretation of the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad also requires some understanding of the economic development of Meiji Japan, particularly the emergence of the silk industry. Nakagami points out that *Kyōdai shinjū* was probably brought to Kasuga by *jokō* (mill girls) who worked in silk factories in Gōshū.⁴¹⁰ As the principal source of Meiji era wealth, the silk industry was a central feature of Japanese nationalism at a time when Japan was struggling to achieve parity with the imperialist nations of the west.⁴¹¹ A former *jokō* recalled, ‘We were often told (by the minister): “You (*jokō*) are the treasure of our country; Japan would be ruined without you because the silk industry constitutes the foundation of the Japanese economy.”’⁴¹² Initially, *jokō* were drawn from daughters of high-status families, proud of their contribution to the modern nation-state. However, when increasing production saw the size of factories expand, the need for *jokō* ballooned.⁴¹³ As a result, many daughters of poor families from non-industrialised areas, including Kumano, were recruited as labour in the silk factories which, as production increased, became increasingly oppressive workplaces. Production continued into the post-war era, with

⁴¹⁰ NKZ 15, p. 213.

⁴¹¹ Tamanoi 1998, p. 85-114.

⁴¹² Tamanoi 1998, p. 107.

⁴¹³ Tamanoi 1998, p. 86.

Nakagami's eldest sister (a model for Akiyuki's eldest sister, Yoshiko) sent to a silk industry town in the 1950s. Despite the fact that many daughters from the city of Shingū went to work in the silk industry, *Kyōdai shinjū* did not become a community *bon* dance ballad anywhere in the city except the *hisabetsu buraku* of Kasuga. Seeing this fact as displaying the idiosyncrasies of Kasuga, Nakagami valued *Kyōdai shinjū* as the 'silenced message' of the Burakumin women who sang the ballad without modifying it to accord with local context.⁴¹⁴

In the pre-war era, mill girls were subject to the masculinist ideologies of patriarchy and nationalism at that time of the construction of the modern nation-state. As previously noted, while girls from impoverished families later comprised the silk factory labour force, in the early years of the industry factory girls were the daughters of the elite. This elite background can be seen in the language of *Kyōdai shinjū*, which, unlike many folk ballads, is characterised by the extensive use of *keigo*, honorific Japanese language. Nakagami, who seems to have been unaware of the early involvement of girls from wealthy families in the silk industry, dismisses this use of *keigo* as 'bad' (*detarame*) grammar.⁴¹⁵ To him, the *keigo* demonstrates the transcendent viewpoint of a third person 'narrator' (*katarite*). According to Nakagami's explanation, the *katarite*'s voice demonstrates the perspective of the 'community which includes land, nature and state' that he regards as metaphorical 'parents' who, while grieving for their children, nonetheless expect tragic consequence to beset those young people who deviate from the norm by violating social taboos such as incest. In other words, Nakagami sees the *katarite* as

⁴¹⁴ NKZ 15, p. 213.

⁴¹⁵ NKZ 15, p. 214.

representing the ‘will power’ of the community which manipulates the brother and sister as if they were ‘marionettes’ to commit a double suicide.⁴¹⁶

Since the pre-modern genre, *kishu ryūritan* (legends of exiled nobles), were also characterised by extensive use of *keigo*, we might read *Kyōdai shinjū* as a *kishu ryūritan* about a brother and sister from the Kyoto aristocracy. Given that the setting of the ballad is Gōshū, a silk industry centre, Okiyo can be regarded as one of the original aristocratic daughters despatched to bring glory to the new Japanese nation through her work in the mills.⁴¹⁷ While Monten leaves Kyoto for Gōshū to commit murder for his incestuous love for his sister, it is Okiyo who, having been sent to the mills, must sacrifice her life for the family and the nation. For Kasuga women, who often left home at a young age to go to major cities as migrant workers, *Kyōdai shinjū* surely had personal significance through the evocation of separation from the family or a lover.

Nakagami regards both the Burakumin ballad of *Kyōdai shinjū* and the Kumano *kishu ryūritan* of Magoichi as conveying the trace of the subalternity imposed by the centre on Burakumin people (and the Kumano area). As noted in Chapter One, Nakagami’s view evokes Antonio Gramsci’s focus on the history of subaltern groups. The Italian theorist identified subaltern history as ‘necessarily fragmented and episodic’ and regarded any ‘trace’ of the historical activity of subaltern groups as having ‘incalculable value.’⁴¹⁸ For Nakagami, Burakumin oral folklore has ‘incalculable value’ because it is also a ‘trace’ that contains the

⁴¹⁶ NKZ 15, p. 214-215.

⁴¹⁷ In support of *Kyōdai shinjū* as a narrative of elite siblings in modern Japan, I refer to *Iyo no Matsuyama Kyōdai shinjū* (*Brother and Sister Double Suicide of Iyo Matsuyama*), a ballad sung until the Second World War in Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture. The use of *keigo* to refer to the brother is seen in this Matsuyama version. This ballad tells of the twenty-one year old brother, Teruo, who is a student studying English and the twenty-year-old sister, Okiyo, who stays at home to practice sewing. Given these features, the brother and sister can be seen as siblings from an elite family that has the financial means to provide their son with tertiary education. For further detail, see Tamai 2006, p. 2-21.

⁴¹⁸ *Antonio Gramsci: Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 54-55.

silenced voices of Burakumin people (here Burakumin women), who have been marginalised by ‘the activity of the ruling groups.’⁴¹⁹

Nakagami’s view of the value of oral narratives was confirmed after a trip to Ise, the home of Japan’s principal Shinto shrine. During a visit to the shrine library, Nakagami found over two hundred thousand books containing records of the activities of past royal families. Convinced that imperial authority in Japan rested upon the ‘written word,’ he declared that ‘the emperor rules over the land by means of thousands of words and letters.’⁴²⁰ Since the tradition of writing literature such as *waka* (Japanese poetry) and *monogatari* (tales) has been monopolised by the nobility since ancient times, Nakagami regards the illiterate Burakumin as a people who have long been abandoned by tradition.⁴²¹ As a novelist who uses the Japanese language, Nakagami reveals his ambivalence towards the imperative upon the writer to make use of the ‘written word,’ which, since the time of the *Kojiki*, has been traditionally used to justify and reinforce the hegemony of the centre. Nakagami particularly considers his role as a Burakumin novelist as providing him with the paradoxical use of the ‘written word’ to write against the hegemonic centre. While the act of writing naturally implies a celebration of the same hegemonic centre that marginalised Burakumin people, writing for Nakagami is the act of contesting that centre.

Further, Nakagami regarded Burakumin oral culture as independent from the emperor’s sovereignty over written language.⁴²² He asserts that the ‘spoken word’ as seen in genre such as folklore has the ‘mythical function’ to challenge the written word and the system

⁴¹⁹ Antonio Gramsci: *Selection from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 55.

⁴²⁰ NKZ 14, p. 609-610.

⁴²¹ Nakagami 1999a, p. 340.

⁴²² NKZ 14, p. 610.

that the emperors of ancient times established by compiling books of mythologies.⁴²³ The fact that, unlike the usual *Gōshū ondo*, *Kyōdai shinjū* was not modified to the local Kasuga context suggests an understanding among those who sang the ballad of the socio-historical complexity of relations between the *hisabetsu buraku* and the centre. While the song's *keigo* implies an elite background to the tragic couple, the brother's incestuous love for his sister strongly interrogates the hegemonic family system that is also subverted by family relations in the *roji*. To Nakagami, interpreting *Kyōdai shinjū* is to decipher the hidden voice of the subaltern members of the Kasuga community and the oppressive social penalties its members incur.

Imo no chikara: Power of Women

Nakagami also points out that *Kyōdai shinjū* is a song about the sexual maturity of young siblings. While the siblings are becoming mature adults, their parents are in decline. In the brother's eye, the sister's maturation occurs simultaneously with that of his own, so that her mature body becomes a sign of his own sexual ripeness. This is also the son's displacement of the mother with the sister as the object of his erotic love. Nakagami explains that in the presence of his sister, the brother is affected by '*imo no chikara*,' the power of women, which the sister inevitably acquires as she becomes older.⁴²⁴ *Imo*, 妹 in *kanji*, literally means younger sister. In Japanese tradition *imo* further implies a woman who is in a relationship with a man.⁴²⁵ For a brother, therefore, this term means sister regardless of whether she is older or younger. For a male lover, the term refers to a woman for whom he longs as if she was a loyal sister. Nakagami,

⁴²³ Nakagami 2000, p. 23.

⁴²⁴ NKZ 15, p. 215-216.

⁴²⁵ *Daijisen*, p. 187.

in fact, insists that *imo no chikara* is actually a more significant motif in *Kyōdai shinjū* than the incest taboo.⁴²⁶

Nakagami understands the power of women in the same sense as that discussed by Yanagita Kunio. In his 1925 essay entitled ‘Imo no chikara,’ Yanagita presents a theory of the transition of the disposition of the Japanese people by investigating the transition of the relationship between brothers and sisters during the late Taisho period at which time the government focused on transforming Japan into a modern industrialised nation.

One thing that struck me is the increasing intimacy between older brothers and younger sisters. As older brothers grow, they rely more and more on their younger sisters. This phenomenon, which was not known before, has now become quite ordinary.⁴²⁷

Although he acknowledged this phenomenon as a phase of the liberation of women that resulted in new forms of family structure and new systems of education, Yanagita did not probe these modern aspects. Instead, he sought to investigate the role of women in ancient myth, local ritual, and folk religion. In doing so, Yanagita identified what he regarded as women’s ‘special physiology’ (*tokushu seiri*) which gave rise to *imo no chikara*, a power specific to Japanese women.

As it has been understood in our discipline [of Japanese native ethnology], women have controlled almost all the principal aspects of the religious festivals and prayers. In our race, shamans have always been women in principal. [...] The original reason that these roles were especially suitable for women was probably in their ability of narrating mystery because their emotional nature always makes them the first in the crowd to sicken with psychosis immediately after the events. There have been many occasions for men, who fight with nature and enemies, to rely on the power of women. This is because women could always offer predictions and ideas to be used by men in their pursuit of war and

⁴²⁶ NKZ 15, p. 215-216.

⁴²⁷ This excerpt from Yanagita’s ‘Imo no chikara’ is translated by Mariko Asano Tamanai and is published in her book *Under the Shadow of Nationalism*. See Tamanai 1998, p. 126 and for the original text see *Yanagita Kunio zenshū* 11, p. 25.

peace. That people deified the power of women is a consequence of their belief in women's power. As we tend to deal with the sacred separately from the mundane, people of the past were rather afraid of touching the power of women precisely because it was regarded to be sacred.⁴²⁸

Given Yanagita's observations, and leaving aside the questionable claims made regarding the tendency of women to 'sicken with psychosis,' Nakagami's view of *Kyōdai shinjū* as a song of *imo no chikara* seems appropriate. It is further significant that the ballad is sung mostly by women and that Nakagami's depiction in *Kareki nada* of a woman who sang the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad has a close parallel with Yanagita's view of the ability of women to 'narrate mystery' (*fushigi o katari eru*). Okiyo's remonstrance with her brother that 'people who heard this would call us beasts,' and 'Our parents would disown us if they knew' is an expression of her fear of the cruelty of the crowd and its authority which she senses through her 'emotional nature' (*kandō shiyasui shūsei*) which must, in Yanagita's theory, 'sicken with psychosis' when experiencing unusual and immoral activities such as incest. Nakagami's depiction of the nervousness, inspiration, and occasional insanity of Mie, Akiyuki's half-sister, has a close parallel to Yanagita's insistence of the 'emotional nature' of women.

Yanagita argues that the increasing 'intimacy between older brothers and younger sisters' (*kyōdai no shitashimi*) in the Taisho period is a revival of the traditional Japanese erotic couple paradigm known as '*imose*,' 妹背 literally younger sister (*imo*, 妹) and brother (*se*, 背). *Se*, which can mean brother, lover and husband, appears in many early Japanese texts paired with *imo*, sister (both younger and older), lover and wife. Below is a poem from the *Man'yōshū* (compiled circa late 8th century, translated as *The Ten Thousand Leaves*) featuring *imose*.

⁴²⁸ This excerpt from Yanagita's 'Imo no chikara,' until the third sentence, is translated by Tamanoi and is published in her book *Under the Shadow of Nationalism*. The third sentence is my translation. See Tamanoi 1998, p. 126 and for the original text see *Yanagita Kunio zenshū* 11, p. 25-26.

Rather than be left behind

longing for you,

would that I could be

Imo and Se Mountains –

‘husband and wife’-

There in the land of Ki.⁴²⁹

As seen in this verse composed by the court poet Kasa no Kanamura (7-8th century), since ancient times *imose* have been referenced as an ideal couple who long for each other. In many novels published in the Meiji and Taisho eras, too, the relationship between the man and the woman was often depicted as that of older man and his loyal, sister-like younger woman.⁴³⁰ Drawing on Yanagita’s *Imo no chikara* to read Meiji novels that depict a man’s desire for a younger, single, middle-class woman, such as *Imōto ni okuru tegami* (1912, *Letters to the Sisters*) by Mizuno Yōshū (1883-1947) and *Futon* (1907, *The Quilt*) by Tayama Katai (1872-1930), Ōtsuka Eiji argues that both *minzokugaku* (folkloristics) and Japanese modern literature represent women as sister-like shamans who merely reside in the ‘private’ sphere to support and comfort men.⁴³¹ As noted in Chapter Two in the discussion on Mizuta’s ‘discourse of men,’ in modern Japanese society, the most ‘private’ male spaces were those in which women resided, including the home and the red-light district. These sites were in distinct contrast to the ‘public’ sphere. For men, ‘private’ places of this kind were a realm in which to seek refuge from ‘public’

⁴²⁹ *The Ten Thousand Leaves*, p. 266-267. The land of Ki is a region also known as Kishū, that is Nakagami’s homeland.

⁴³⁰ Seki 2009, p. 109-110.

⁴³¹ Ōtsuka 2011, p. 204-206.

places and in which they could express their own pure, perfect interiority through ‘regressing’ into the sexuality of a comforting woman.⁴³²

In this context, although Yanagita’s discussion of women initially appears to draw on a traditional view of *imo*, it is also informed by a modernist interpretation of *imōto*. Rather than the revival of an ancient concept, the increasing ‘intimacy between older brothers and younger sisters’ can be regarded as evidence of the ‘formation of the modern family.’⁴³³ Yanagita here devalues Taisho women’s modern ‘interiority’ by dismissing it as the essentialist ‘special physiology’ of women inscribed since ancient times in Japanese religion, literature and folklore.⁴³⁴ In other words, ‘Imo no chikara’ offers a literature of nativism that supports the hegemonic mode of nationalists. These nationalists sought to establish a modern Japanese nation-state through identifying factors which define a nation, such as language, common descent and tradition. ‘Imo no chikara’ was constructed by Yanagita as part of this tradition. This resonates with the representation by Indian nativist scholars of the *sati* rite as symbolic of the ‘ideals of womanly conduct’ and evidence of ‘the cool and unfaltering courage of Indian women.’⁴³⁵ As noted in Chapter One, in this sense Indian women were merely used as a scapegoat to justify the patriarchal nationalist discourse circulated by male nativists. Therefore, like the Indian *sati*, the *imōto*, to borrow Spivak’s words, can be regarded as ‘the sexed subaltern subject’ who had ‘no space’ to speak in the modern masculinist-oriented society.⁴³⁶

⁴³² Mizuta 1993, p. 63-65.

⁴³³ Seki 2009, p. 110.

⁴³⁴ Ōtsuka 2011, p. 204-206.

⁴³⁵ Spivak 1999, p. 294.

⁴³⁶ Spivak 1999, p. 307.

Sisters as Working Women

When Nakagami applies Yanagita's gendered concept of *imo no chikara* to his interpretation of *Kyōdai shinjū*, he is also caught in the trap of the modernist disregard of woman's interiority, a disregard that appropriates the voices of women to fulfil nativist and nationalist desire. This effect is clearly apparent, too, in his depiction of the outcaste sisters in the Akiyuki trilogy. In order to understand Nakagami's attempt to reveal the 'secret message' of Burakumin women in the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad and to create a narrative that speaks their voice, I will refer to the concept of *ane* (姉, older sister) which can also mean 'working woman.'

In the boom of the silk industry in early 1900s, most mill girls were daughters of poor peasants and were therefore outside the elite modernist writers' concept of *imōto*, who was usually depicted as a student or a young woman who lived at home supported by her middle-class family. A typical case of the *imōto* is found in Mizuno's *Imōto ni okuru tegami* which depicts three students of a girls' school who are in training to become the respectable *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) of the new future. On the other hand, as seen in the case of Nakagami's own eldest sister, even in the 1950s eldest sisters (*ane*) often left home for major cities at the age of fifteen to become migrant workers and remit money back to their parents and younger siblings.

In her criticism of the modernist regimentation of women as *imōto*, Seki Reiko focuses on the difference in meaning between *ane* and *imo*.

As previously explained, '*imo*' [妹] is a term used in reference to a young woman regardless of whether she is younger or older [than the user of the term]. We should note that there is a difference – apparently subtle but actually important – between '*imo*' and

‘*ane*’ [姉]. As a characteristic of ‘*ane*’ which can never be found in the ‘*imo*,’ we should not forget that there is a connotation of ‘working woman.’ For instance, some dictionaries tell us that ‘*ane*’ means ‘*geisha*, *shakufu* [barmaid], *jochū*, *gejo* [housemaid], *komori* [baby-sitter]’ (See *Shogakukan’s Japanese Dictionary*). Furthermore, ‘*ane*’ [姉] also indicates ‘matured women’ and therefore has a close parallel to ‘*ane*’ [姐] which implies a craftswoman, vendor, yakuza’s wife, prostitute or barmaid in the entertainment district.⁴³⁷

Based on this passage, we can conclude that *ane* in the sense of ‘working woman’ particularly implies women who work in ‘the realms of women’ which include the home and the entertainment district. The character, Mon, known as ‘*Mon nēsan*’ (姐さん), a confident, single, middle-aged woman and bar owner who appears in *Chi no hate* is a good example that demonstrates this context of *ane*. Mie, who stays at home to do housework, on the other hand, is never referred to as *nēsan* in the narrative. In the *roji* community, she is recognised as an *imōto* figure, that is, as the dead Ikuo’s younger sister rather than Akiyuki’s older sister. Even the young prostitute Satoko is not really regarded as *nēsan* which demonstrates her lack of confidence in her occupation and her ambiguous position as an ‘immoral’ woman in the community.

Given that women factory workers were regarded as ‘nursemaids of machines’ (*kikai no komori*),⁴³⁸ the silk industry, too, can be included in the category of the women’s sphere. As Seki insists, the term *ane* demonstrates that there are other more complex identifications rather than binary pairs such as single/married or disreputable/respectable in Japanese society. Her words also contest the masculinist categorisation by the then influential critic, Hayashi Tatsuo (1896-1984), of women into one of two categories of *ane* or *imōto*. According to Hayashi, regardless of their sibling structure, all women could be categorised as either a typical *ane*, who

⁴³⁷ Seki 2009, p. 111-112.

⁴³⁸ Akamatsu 1993, p. 74.

was ‘manly, active and strong,’ or a typical *imōto* who was ‘sentimental and chaste.’⁴³⁹ The mill girls, however, interrogated this simplistic modernist categorisation in that they combined both *ane* and *imōto* characteristics: they gave their ‘manly’ all as *ane* to the arduous mill conditions because of their ‘sentimental’ *imōto*-like affection for the families they laboured to support.

Okiyo and Antigone: The Incestuous Sisters in Archetypical Narratives

As a dedicated *imōto*, whose loyalty and devotion for her brother results in her death, *Kyōdai Shinjū*’s Okiyo recalls Antigone, the daughter and younger sister of Oedipus. I will accordingly discuss how Antigone is depicted in Sophocles’ tragedies in order to profile mythical and archetypical representations of incest. While drawn from the western canon, I will demonstrate that Antigone’s narrative can usefully be invoked in an analysis of Okiyo and the representation in Burakumin folklore of a younger sister’s unspeakable incestuous love for her older brother.

In Sophocles’ play, *Antigone*, the eponymous heroine is a daughter of the unwittingly incestuous marriage of Oedipus, King of Thebes (her brother and father) and his mother Jocasta (her mother). After the death of her brothers, Polyneices and Eteocles, who fight for succession to their dead father’s throne, the kingship is assumed by Creon, Antigone’s uncle who declares Polyneices a traitor to the state. Although Creon’s law decrees that mourning for Polyneices will be punishable by death, Antigone attempts to secure a respectable burial for her brother. In doing so, she incurs Creon’s wrath. While burying her brother alone, she is captured by Creon’s guards and brought before her uncle. Declaring that although she knew Creon’s law

⁴³⁹ Hayashi 1940 and quoted in Seki 2009, p. 110.

she chose to break it, Antigone expounds upon the superiority of ‘divine law’ over that made by man. Boldly defiant, Antigone is sentenced to being entombed in an underground chamber, after which she hangs herself. The disastrous path of the narrative is complete when her cousin and Creon’s son Haimon, to whom Antigone was engaged, kills himself after finding her body. Queen Eurydice, wife of Creon, also kills herself after having witnessed her husband’s brutality.⁴⁴⁰

Hegelian and Lacanian scholars interpret the Antigone narrative as the tale of a symbolic figure of kinship and its dismantlement in which Creon is the representative of state authority and its ethical order based on the principal of universality. Feminist scholars such as Luce Irigaray and Carol Jacobs also refer to Antigone’s defiance as an example of feminine anti-authoritarianism in the face of a political system in which the state has substantially centralised social control. In feminist readings, Antigone is often regarded as a figure of feminine defiance representing kinship as the ‘private’ domestic space, that is, the realm of women, which antagonises the ‘public’ phallogocentric sphere.⁴⁴¹

Not all feminist scholars, however, read Antigone in precisely this way. In her essay, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, Judith Butler notably sees Antigone as a voice which represents ‘how kinship makes its claim within the language of the state.’⁴⁴² Unlike Hegel and Lacan who, in their interpretation that focuses on the support given by a sister to a kinship ideal, make no reference to the possibility of incestuous desire between Antigone and Polyneices, Butler insists that Antigone’s devotion for her brother is ‘an impossible and death-

⁴⁴⁰ See *The Antigone of Sophocles in Greek and English* (1894, translated by Richard C. Jebb) and *Sophocles’ Antigone* (2000, translated by Marianne MacDonald).

⁴⁴¹ Butler 2000, p. 2-3. For further details see Irigaray 1985 and Jacobs 1996.

⁴⁴² Butler 2000, p. 6.

bent incestuous love.’⁴⁴³ She argues therefore that the incestuous sister Antigone represents kinship in its ‘deformation’ and ‘displacement.’⁴⁴⁴

As Butler notes, analysis of Antigone’s deformed family provides insights into the nostalgic contemporary idealisation of the family which can be seen, for example, in the Vatican’s protest against homosexuality as a violation of some ideal family or even the ‘natural’ human condition. In the present day, kinship has become ‘fragile, porous, and expansive’ through various circumstances such as divorce, remarriage, same-sex marriage, common-law marriage, migration, exile and global displacements. For many contemporary children, the places of father and mother are blurred and variously occupied or dispersed so that the equilibrium of ‘the symbolic’ can no longer apply.⁴⁴⁵ Akiyuki’s ‘matrilineal’ family and his relationship with his long-separated half-sister Satoko can be also seen in the context of Antigone-style kinship displacement discussed by Butler.

As the tale of a younger sister who defends her older brother, *Antigone* can be considered as a narrative that demonstrates *imo no chikara*, the power of woman. Antigone’s strength to advocate for ‘divine law’ in defiance of the King has a close parallel to Yanagita’s view of the ability of women to narrate the ‘*fushigi*,’ that is to narrate mystery and unearthliness. Her defiance of King Creon is motivated by her strong grief for her dead brother which arguably marks the ‘emotional nature’ of the sister. It also marks the ‘*kyōdai no shitashimi*’ (intimacy between older brothers and younger sisters) that is a characteristic of *imo no chikara*. Moreover, if we read an incestuous context in the narrative, *Antigone* can be interpreted as a narrative of *imose* – sister and brother – lovers.

⁴⁴³ Butler 2000, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁴ Butler 2000, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁵ Butler 2000, p. 22-23.

Butler examines *Antigone* as a narrative which reveals the precariousness of both idealised kinship and political sovereignty. This precariousness becomes apparent through the heroine's illocutionary act (Speech Act) that transgresses both kinship and gender norms.⁴⁴⁶ Antigone's transgression is to grieve for her dead brother in 'public' and to insist on her right to express this grief in 'public.'⁴⁴⁷ King Creon's law presumes the guilt of anyone who grieves for Polyneices (who is legally a traitor) and also anyone who voices doubts about the authority of the law. Antigone is regarded as 'savage'⁴⁴⁸ by the chorus of elderly Theban men who often take the side of Creon. Confronting Antigone, however, Creon attributes masculinity to Antigone, declaring that 'I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty. No! [...] she [...] shall not avoid a doom most dire.'⁴⁴⁹ Antigone's manliness is expressed in her claim of the superiority of the 'divine law' over the King's law. In Butler's explanation, this claim by the sister of Polyneices signifies not only defiance of the law but also the assumption of the voice of one strong law (divine) that contests a weaker law (human).⁴⁵⁰ Antigone thus appears 'to assume a certain form of masculine sovereignty, a manhood that cannot be shared, which requires that its other be both feminine and inferior.'⁴⁵¹ Since her defiance is against King Creon, it is he rather than Antigone who is rendered feminine and inferior by her claim. In order to grieve for her dead brother in public, Antigone becomes a 'man,' the gender of sovereignty.

⁴⁴⁶ Butler 2000, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁷ Butler 2000, p. 80.

⁴⁴⁸ *Sophocles' Antigone*, p. 50.

⁴⁴⁹ *The Antigone of Sophocles in Greek and English*, p. 43.

⁴⁵⁰ Butler 2000, p. 11.

⁴⁵¹ Butler 2000, p. 9.

Why does Antigone desire to express grief for her dead brother in public even though she knows that the price of her voice will be harsh death? For Butler, the answer lies in the heroine's monologue recited when she approaches the hole in which she will be entombed.

O tomb, O bridal chamber, O deep-dug home, to be guarded for ever, where I go to join those who are my own.⁴⁵²

Butler reads Antigone's words as an expression of her predestined incestuous love for Polyneices. For Antigone, death represents a form of marriage to her brother who is already dead.⁴⁵³ But, of course, the public expression of grief for a brother who is loved incestuously must be forbidden by the law. As Butler notes, this demonstrates how kinship law (the father's law), which forbids incest between siblings, 'makes its claim within the language of the state.'⁴⁵⁴ Through becoming a 'man,' Antigone makes her unspeakable love for the dead brother representable as fraternal – so to speak, homosocial – affection. Antigone's defiance is ambivalent in that it demonstrates antagonism towards, but at the same time affinity with, both state law and kinship law.

Antigone's quality of representing both the 'public' and 'private' spheres is the most significant difference between this narrative and the *imo no chikara* nature of women depicted in modern Japanese literature. According to the *imo no chikara* theory, women merely represent a 'private' domestic sphere in which their role is to support and comfort men. Because it can refer to female lovers and older sisters (*ane*), the term, *imo*, nonetheless has a radical element in that it demonstrates both the dissolution of the barrier between kinship and the other and a chronological inversion of the relationship between sisters. Antigone, however, displays an even more radical inversion of gender.

⁴⁵² Quoted in Butler 2000, p. 23.

⁴⁵³ Butler 2000, p. 24.

⁴⁵⁴ Butler 2000, p. 6.

Oedipus at Colonus, written by Sophocles several years after *Antigone*, further develops the incestuous aspect and gender inversion evident in *Antigone*. In this later narrative, Antigone is told by the dying Oedipus: 'From none did you have love more than from this man, without whom you will now spend the remainder of your life.'⁴⁵⁵ Butler explains this as 'a demand that verges on incestuous possessiveness' by the father who is also the brother of his daughter.⁴⁵⁶ Oedipus' words imply his 'male gaze' towards Antigone's sexual ripeness: he is attracted by her *imo no chikara*. The fact that Antigone accepts her father's language implies her complicity in an incestuous relationship with the dead father/brother. The curse that Oedipus lays upon her is 'serving death' for the rest of her life; in other words 'incest' makes her life a 'living death.' The tomb as a 'bridal chamber' in the earlier play suggests the deathlike nature of incest which, hegemonically, can never be viable in a life-affirming culture.⁴⁵⁷ If this is the case then Antigone's loyalty (incestuous love) to Polyneices can be seen as a transgression against, but at the same time obedience to, the father's law. Butler remarks that 'she both honors and disobeys this curse as she displaces her love for her [dead] father onto her [dead] brother [Polyneices].'⁴⁵⁸ Butler calls this 'promiscuous obedience' which is a strategy to disturb existing social preconditions such as family norms.

In *Oedipus at Colonus* Antigone's masculine gender is announced by her own father in the 'private' realm of kinship. Oedipus refers to Antigone who cares for him in exile as a 'man' and the daughter loyally accompanies the father into the wilderness. When Antigone takes the masculine initiative by saying to her father, 'Follow, follow me this way with your unseeing

⁴⁵⁵ Quoted in Butler 2000, p. 60.

⁴⁵⁶ Butler 2000, p. 60.

⁴⁵⁷ Butler 2000, p. 23-24.

⁴⁵⁸ Butler 2000, p. 60.

steps, father, where I lead you!’⁴⁵⁹ she effectively becomes his son and brother. As Butler notes, the sister/daughter has taken the place of ‘nearly every man in her family’ and ‘man’ is ‘the title that Oedipus bestows upon her, a gift or reward for her loyalty.’⁴⁶⁰ The fact that Oedipus names Antigone as a ‘man’ can be also seen as concealing his incestuous desire for his daughter/sister behind a homosocial bond that is an acceptable form of affection in heteronormative kinship relations. Because she accepts her father’s curse of incest as living death and gender inversion, Antigone is destined to become ‘promiscuously’ ambivalent and transgressive in terms of both kinship and state law. She eventually kills herself because her incestuous love for her brothers (Polyneices and ambiguously Oedipus) is, in Butler’s words, love that ‘can only be consummated by its obliteration’ and it is ‘no consummation at all.’⁴⁶¹ Based on this view, the following section will discuss a sister’s death-bent incestuous love for her brother sung in *Kyōdai shinjū*.

Okiyo: A Sister who Plots Double Suicide with the Brother

One notable aspect of the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad is the absence of the father of the siblings, Okiyo and Monten. Monten, therefore, can be considered as the heir to the family, a substitute for the ‘father.’ Okiyo then becomes the daughter sacrificed for the brother heir. In this context, although the mother is the father’s widow, she can also be seen as having the position of wife of the patriarch as well as wife of her unmarried son. Accordingly, Okiyo’s relationship

⁴⁵⁹ Quoted in Butler 2000, p. 61.

⁴⁶⁰ Butler 2000, p. 61-62.

⁴⁶¹ Butler 2000, p. 76.

with her brother and mother demonstrates a close parallel to that of Antigone with Oedipus/Polyneices and Jocasta.

While Jocasta is dead and is seldom referred to in *Antigone*, Okiyo's mother is alive and given a key role in the tragic *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative. This mother is a *nakatsugi*, a temporal matriarch, whose role is to relay the patrimony to the next patriarch. The next patriarch here is her twenty-year-old son, Monten, whose illness has suspended his right to succeed to the position of family head. Thus the family inscribed in *Kyōdai shinjū* ambiguously embodies both patriarchy and matriarchy. As previously noted, the ballad depicts the tragedy of the sister's sexual ripeness, read by Nakagami as *imo no chikara*, which must inevitably attract the brother as the pair mature. In the brother's eye, furthermore, as Okiyo's sexuality rises the mother's declines. Although the mother presumably knows of her sick son's desire for Okiyo, she never stops her daughter from visiting the young man. Given these perspectives, the mother can be seen as an enabler of brother and sister incest. In order to save the patriarch's life so that the *ie* (patriarchal family) will continue, the mother in effect forces her daughter to sacrifice her sexuality.

Like Oedipus, the patriarch(-to-be), Monten, is the father/brother who has an incestuous desire for his daughter/sister. For Okiyo, Monten's request of incest is the law of the 'father', that is, the law of kinship as well as of the state because the *ie* patriarch is institutionalised by the state. *Kyōdai shinjū* can be thus regarded, to borrow Butler's view of *Antigone*, as a narrative which demonstrates 'how kinship makes its claim within the language of the state.'⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² Butler 2000, p. 6.

In the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad the community voice is heard as Okiyo's words remonstrating with her brother against his incestuous desire. However, even as she voices this law, she resists it. Firstly Okiyo declares, 'people who heard this would call us beasts,' and, shifting the focus from the general law to the law of the father and family, 'our parents would disown us if they knew.' Continuing as the voice of the law she urges Monten, 'There is a woman somewhere to be your wife, and a man to be my husband too.' Yet, having voiced this law as a good daughter should, Okiyo seems to rebel against her own chanting of the voice of the community by telling Monten that she has a husband and that she will lie with her brother if he kills this husband. As revealed at the end of the song, the nineteen-year-old husband, Masao, is Okiyo's fiction. Having outfitted herself in the attire of *komusō* to disguise herself as a monk husband, like Antigone, Okiyo becomes a 'man' who is able to defy the patriarchal law of her brother. At the same time, and in the same way that Antigone advocated for divine law, Okiyo assumes the voice of the 'divine' Buddhist law.

What does the assumption of the *komusō*'s voice mean for Okiyo? *Komusō* is a term that originated from an appellation for Japanese mendicant monks of the Fuke School of Zen Buddhism which flourished during the Edo period (1603-1867). This school was abolished in 1871 by the Meiji government because of its strong association with the Tokugawa shogunate. Fuke monks were usually non-ordained monks who, without shaving their heads, went on pilgrimages from place to place. In the sense that they lived by collecting alms, the life of *komusō* monks could be traced back to that of the historical Buddha himself.⁴⁶³ As seen in the *Kyōdai shinjū* account of Okiyo's transforming herself into a monk, the *komusō* wear a hat like an inverted straw basket (*tengai*) that covers the entire face and head. These monks are renowned

⁴⁶³ Sanford 1977, p. 414.

as players of the vertical bamboo flute or *shakuhachi*. In the *komusō* custom of Zen Buddhism, music played on the *shakuhachi* is regarded as ‘a vocal, though non-verbal, expression of [the] ineffable essence’ of enlightenment.⁴⁶⁴ The *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad, however, particularly refers to the fact that Okiyo’s *shakuhachi* is ‘one-shaku-five-sun’ (*i-sshaku go-sun*, approximately 45 cm) in length and is thus shorter than the usual one *shaku* and eight *sun* (*i-sshaku hachi-sun*, about 54 cm). This shorter *shakuhachi* implies the falsehood of the *komusō* who is actually a woman. The sound of her *shakuhachi* echoing across Seta Bridge – a metonym for the border between ‘life’ and ‘death’ – was not the non-verbal enlightenment of the *komusō*’s Zen doctrine. Rather it was Okiyo’s own ‘ineffable’ voice speaking her incestuous love for the brother. In the ballad, Seta Bridge is sung as a miracle realm which invalidates all law and thus opens the possibility of the violation of all sorts of taboo.

For Okiyo, pretending to be a *komusō* not only substantialises her alleged husband ‘Masao,’ whose name interestingly means ‘true’ (*masa*, 正) ‘husband’ (*o*, 夫), but makes her an embodiment of Buddhist law. The confrontation between Monten and Masao is a confrontation between kinship and religion or the divine. In the section of *Kyōdai shinjū* in which Okiyo speaks the community voice, we have a sense that she believes it may be possible to change her brother’s mind. In revealing that she has a husband, however, and in suggesting even that Monten murder her husband, she seeks to break with both kinship and divine laws.

The rhyme in the line ‘For one night, two nights, or even for three’ (*ichiya niya demo sanya demo*) is notable within the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad which has a rather monotonous melody sung in a low key. I read this rhyme as expressing the surge of the brother and sister’s erotic

⁴⁶⁴ Sanford 1977, p. 412.

longing for each other. It further recalls the passage from ‘Misaki’ in which, as Akiyuki and Satoko have incestuous sex, their beating hearts say to each other, in Akiyuki’s mind at least, ‘How I’ve longed for you, [*itoshii, itoshii*].’

In the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad, the initiative is taken by Monten who begs his sister to provide sex. Yet, if we accept that the sister, Okiyo, also has incestuous desire for her brother, then the brother/sister double suicide can be seen as an outcome of her will rather than Monten’s. By falsely declaring to Monten that she has a *komusō* husband, Okiyo knows that she will invoke an intent within her brother to kill his rival. She then assumes the guise of the rival man almost certainly in the knowledge that this will result in her murder by her brother. She may also have sensed that, given Monten’s obsessive love, he would take his own life after her death.

If we accept that the double suicide results from Okiyo’s plot, then we can see the sister’s strong desire for the brother. And as it does in the case of Antigone, we can argue that death here means marriage to her brother. Furthermore, her giving herself to him in this way is a means of sacrificing herself to kinship laws that prevents both the brother and herself from breaking the incest taboo. In other words, Okiyo allows Monten to kill her in order that he might save himself from the wrath of the community. In this way, the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad provides a paradoxical reading of the sister’s voice and clearly demonstrates her capacity to achieve her will. Okiyo thus subverts the masculinist reading of *imōto*. Okiyo’s becoming a *komusō* monk recalls Antigone’s assumption of manhood to express her unspeakable love for her dead brother. Butler explains that Antigone’s defiance of state law is a repetition of the defiant acts of her brother. Her act of defying the state thus situates her as the one who may be a ‘substitute’ for the brother and, hence, who ‘replaces and territorializes him.’ For Butler, Antigone’s act, in fact, appears to

establish her ‘rivalry’ and ‘superiority’ to Polyneices.⁴⁶⁵ In this context, Okiyo’s act of transforming herself into her husband (Masao) also demonstrates her superior status, which results in her being able to lead her brother to Seta Bridge. Okiyo’s superiority is further evident in her understanding of the community’s voice which expects tragic consequences for those who deviate from the norm by violating a strict social taboo such as incest. Like Sophocles’ *Antigone*, the Burakumin ballad of *Kyōdai shinjū* confirms that in hegemonic terms incestuous love is a love that can only be consummated through its erasure, and that, therefore, is impossible to consummate.

Longing For the Brother and Sister Double Suicide

Returning to an analysis of Satoko, this section will discuss Nakagami’s use of the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative to depict the silenced voice of this incestuous sister in the Akiyuki trilogy. *Kyōdai shinjū* is first cited in *Kareki nada* in dialogue spoken by Satoko. Six months after their incest, Akiyuki and Satoko meet with each other for the first time as half-brother and sister. The meeting is arranged by Akiyuki’s half-sister, Mie. Mie found Satoko by asking Mon who owns a bar in the entertainment street in which Satoko works. Mon is also, so to speak, a ‘sister’ (*nēsan*) for the men of the area, including the *roji* men who frequent the entertainment district. She is also a sister for the women who circulate rumour with her. While *Kareki nada* does not describe Mon’s background, readers are told in both *Hōsenka* and *Chi no hate* that she has a brother-sister like relationship with Ryūzō who is a half-brother of Mon’s father. Akiyuki and Satoko’s reunion is realised by these ‘sisters’ who keep an eager eye on the younger couple.

⁴⁶⁵ Butler 2000, p. 11.

Satoko realised who the man [Akiyuki] was. As soon as she saw Akiyuki's face, she said 'I don't care who my father is.'

[...] When you have a good life and everything is going well, it must be annoying when a whore comes to see you and says, 'I'm your sister.'

'What are you talking about,' Mie chided, worried that Satoko's words would unsettle Akiyuki. [...] 'You wait 'til now to tell me he's my brother, you tell me now he's my brother when it's too late,' Satoko wept. Her large-framed body was hunched over, trembling. [...] Seemingly feeling Satoko's sorrow as her own, Mie stroked her half-sister's face while embracing her and soothing her. [...]

Whether she had something in mind or really needed to relieve herself, Mie left them together to go to the bathroom.

'Hey brother, why don't we do a brother and sister double suicide?' Satoko murmured as she wiped away her tears.

'Don't be stupid.' Akiyuki answered. 'A Brother and Sister Double Suicide' was the name of a dance ballad sung here and there in the town during O-bon.⁴⁶⁶

As seen in this passage, it is Satoko who brings the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative into the discussion by referring to the ballad in terms of her secret incest relationship with Akiyuki. This conversation also suggests that during their sexual exchange, without being aware that he was her brother, Satoko sensed Akiyuki's longing for her. Satoko's whispered suggestion that she and Akiyuki copy the brother and sister in the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad and commit double suicide reveals her desire to translate the meaning of their incest from an exchange between a prostitute and her one-night-stand customer into the forbidden erotic love between a brother and his sister.

While it signifies her attempt at asserting her agency, this reference to *Kyōdai shinjū* also implies Satoko's perception of herself as *kegare*, polluted. This is because the *Kyōdai shinjū* text narrates incest as the deed of a beast, that is, of an entity polluted by *kegare*. In this context,

⁴⁶⁶ NKZ 3, p. 340-341.

Satoko and Okiyo make an interesting contrast. While Satoko has become hegemonically polluted as a sexually experienced prostitute and breaks the incest taboo without knowing that she does so, Okiyo is a pure sister who consciously dies as a virgin for her brother. The name, Okiyo, is an honorific form literally meaning pure and clean. As will be elaborated upon later in the chapter, in *Chi no hate* Satoko becomes a fanatical follower of a local water cult. Her involvement in this movement can be understood as her fear of being *kegare* as a result of both her past work as a prostitute and having incestuous sex with Akiyuki. The brother's longing for the sister and the sister's fear of *kegare* are key motifs of the *Kyōdai shinjū* ballad.

The Burakumin Ballad and Ancient *Kojiki* Myth

Regarding *Kyōdai shinjū* as a representation of the impossibility of a conventional marriage between the brother and sister, Nakagami interprets the ballad as a 'reversal' of the well-known *kuniumi* (birth of the country) narrative from the opening section of the *Kojiki*. This text, compiled in 712, was the 'official' canon of the legitimate history of the imperial family. The *kuniumi* narrative tells of the birth of Japan following the marriage of the god, Izanagi (the father of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, who is worshipped in Shintō as the founding ancestor of the imperial family) and the goddess, Izanami. This couple can, in fact, be considered as a brother and sister pair because they were born at the same time from heaven. According to Nakagami, when it is sung in the Kasuga *hisabetsu buraku*, the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative of an incestuous brother and sister's double suicide is the Burakumin variant of the *kuniumi* narrative of the incestuous god and goddess's birth of Japan. While the divine incest produces a country which inscribes prosperous narratives on Japanese citizens, the Burakumin incest bears 'an

inverted country of darkness’ or a ‘country in reverse’⁴⁶⁷ where oral folklore narrates the death of those who violate taboos and render themselves *kegare*.

In the Akiyuki trilogy, the sense of failure encapsulated in *Kyōdai shinjū* is depicted through the insanity and consequent death of Ikuo, Akiyuki’s older half-brother. Ultimately, Ikuo dies without being able to establish his own family. We might also note that this failure is further encapsulated in the nervous breakdown of the sister, Mie, and her inability either to save Ikuo or to give birth to Ikuo’s offspring. Unlike Ikuo and Mie, however, Akiyuki and Satoko remain sane. I read this as a result of the acceptance by the father, Ryūzō, of their incest – *kuniumi* – and his willingness to accept the brother and sister giving birth to ‘idiot’ children.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Ryūzō merely laughs at Akiyuki’s confession of incest. While Ryūzō’s response stuns Akiyuki, Satoko rebelliously retorts: ‘I’ll give birth to the idiot.’⁴⁶⁸ Ryūzō observes that, because he owns a vast expanse of land in the Arima region of Kumano, he does not care even if the pair have a child. Arima, a town in Kumano City in Mie Prefecture, is also the setting of the *kishu ryūritan* legend of Magoichi. In addition to being the site of land owned by Ryūzō, Arima is the location of the ‘underworld’ in the myth of Izanagi and Izanami.⁴⁶⁹

These mountains, these fields, were nothing more than stories fabricated in the fevered imagination of Hamamura Ryūzō, the King of Flies, the man with the big body and the snake eyes. Izanami died when her private parts were burnt as she gave birth to the god of fire. The cave in which she was interned after her death is less than five minutes by car

⁴⁶⁷ NKZ 15, p. 215.

⁴⁶⁸ NKZ 3, p. 362-363.

⁴⁶⁹ There is a description of Arima and the legend of Suzuki Magoichi in Nakagami’s *Kishū*. See NKZ 14, p. 572-573.

from Ryūzō's Arima land.⁴⁷⁰ The underworld of this myth is here. It is around this area. The man had built a monument [of the Magoichi legend] there.⁴⁷¹

For Ryūzō, all the conventions of mainstream society are inverted in the 'underworld' of Arima. Magoichi was a defeated hero, lame in one leg and blind in one eye.⁴⁷² Ryūzō's acceptance of 'idiot' children who are born from incest is in opposition to the original *Kojiki* myth of *kuniumi*, in which Izanagi and Izanami refuse to accept an imperfect child called *hiruko*, meaning leech-child. This deformed child is seen as the result of the parents erring in the ritual of conjugal intercourse.⁴⁷³ Unlike Akiyuki and Satoko who will keep their 'deformed' child, the child of Izanagi and Izanami is instead set by its parents to float away downstream.⁴⁷⁴

While Ryūzō has an interest in traditional narratives, his interest is confined to the way in which he can appropriate these for his own ends. He therefore laughs away those elements from texts such as the *Kojiki* that promote the conventions of the hegemonic centre. The death of the siblings in *Kyōdai shinjū* demonstrates the penalty demanded by the centre for those who transgress. Ryūzō, however, rejects these hegemonic sanctions in favour of establishing his own glorious nation by affiliating in a way that removes the usual stigma of subalternity attached to Magoichi, the defeated hero of the Arima *kishu ryūritan*. In this sense, Ryūzō's ambition resonates with Gramsci's assertion that the history of subaltern groups is of equal value to the authorised history of the mainstream.

⁴⁷⁰ The cave, traditionally said to be the grave of Izanami, is in the Hana no iwaya Shrine and is dedicated to Izanami and her fire-god son, Kagutsuchi-no-mikoto. See *Hana no iwaya jinja*.

⁴⁷¹ NKZ 3, p. 372.

⁴⁷² NKZ 3, p. 267.

⁴⁷³ Philippi 1977, p. 399.

⁴⁷⁴ See 'Book One, Chapter 2, The Seven Generations of the Age of the Gods Come into Existence,' *Kojiki*, p. 48.

The Incestuous Sister's Love for and Fear of the Brother

The father and daughter, Ryūzō and Satoko resemble each other in terms of applying Burakumin folklore in order to create their own narratives. In Mon's view, Satoko has 'inherited the good parts of Ryūzō, including his liveliness and enthusiasm.' This makes her an extraordinary young woman who possesses 'a supple body with lively arms and legs just like a herbivore.'⁴⁷⁵ On the other hand, Mon compares Satoko's fanaticism regarding the water cult to Ryūzō's obsessive chauvinism regarding Magoichi. Satoko quits prostitution sometime after Akiyuki is sent to prison. Mon is the only person who understands Satoko's feeling for Akiyuki.

'You know Mon,' said Satoko. 'When I talk to you, I remember when I worked in the entertainment district. After quitting the brothel, I went and worked in a bakery. The *panpan* [prostitute] baked *pan* [bread]. It's a good joke, isn't it?

'Forget the past' said Mon. There is nothing good in the past to remember. [...] Satoko murmured to Mon 'Because I wanted money I slept with many men but my brother was the best one.' [...] 'Satoko!' said Mon, lowering her voice as she felt her chest tighten while Satoko stuck out her tongue. [Mon continued] 'What's the point of saying that? Nobody must know.' The smile faded from Satoko's face and she said, 'He knows. That fly shit, that beast knows.' As if suddenly overwrought Satoko stared at Mon with wild eyes. [...]

'My brother and I both wanted him to know but now I hate him knowing more than I would hate a million other people knowing about this. [...]'⁴⁷⁶

Satoko hates Ryūzō because she realises that her father has exploited the secret of the incest committed by herself and Akiyuki to justify the creation of his own narrative. Satoko tried to territorialise the narrative of incest between herself and her brother as the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative of forbidden love between the siblings and their consequent double suicide. Her attempts, however, are ultimately invalidated through Ryūzō's inversion of the incest taboo, a taboo that is

⁴⁷⁵ NKZ 6, p. 212.

⁴⁷⁶ NKZ 6, p. 212.

supported by the *kuniumi* narrative which abhors the birth of the deformed or ‘idiot’ child. Ironically, Ryūzō’s view leaves Satoko alive to fight against him.

In her conflict with Ryūzō, Satoko tries to win Akiyuki over to her side.

‘Until I die I’ll keep egging my brother on by saying, “Kill that man in the cruellest way, torture him.” Mon, I told Akiyuki that his girlfriend’s baby is the child of Hamamura Ryūzō,’ said Satoko.⁴⁷⁷

Satoko’s words, however, are incompatible with her actual influence over Akiyuki. Akiyuki never takes Satoko’s words seriously. He has already heard a rumour that Noriko had given birth to Ryūzō’s son. With no regard for Satoko’s words or the rumour, Akiyuki began an affair with the married Noriko sometime after returning from the prison. Although Ryūzō denies the rumour, Mon assumes that seizing Noriko is important to Ryūzō precisely because she is desired by Akiyuki. This implies that Satoko is again marked as ‘useless’ by Ryūzō and Akiyuki and that, instead of Hideo, her position in the homosocial triangle with these two men has now been replaced by Noriko.

The ‘uselessness’ of Satoko’s intervention to break the father and son’s homosocial bond can be comprehended through Spivak’s observation regarding the subaltern women’s resistance in a masculinist society. As noted in Chapter One Spivak observes:

[...] once a woman performs an act of resistance without infrastructure that would make us recognize resistance, her resistance is in vain.⁴⁷⁸

Lacking Spivak’s infrastructure Satoko is a woman whose resistance is in vain. This was perhaps inevitable since she was excluded from conventional patriarchal society since birth. Until she

⁴⁷⁷ NKZ 6, p. 213.

⁴⁷⁸ Spivak 2006, p. 60.

was seven, Satoko lived in an orphanage as the illegitimate daughter of a prostitute and then once she became older she, too, became a prostitute who was regarded by society as immoral and *kegare*. Even after quitting prostitution, Satoko remains a sexed subject in the enclosed community in which rumours about her promiscuous past and alleged incestuous relationship with her father endlessly circulate.

The ‘infrastructure’ that Satoko needs in her attempt to make her voice audible is access to the language of the law authorised by a man in a position of supremacy. This need can also be seen in Okiyo who becomes a mendicant monk, a man, in a manner similar to Antigone. Like Okiyo and Antigone, Satoko, too, attempts to appropriate divine law in her challenge against the law of the father and society. This she does by affiliating with the male founder of the local water cult. In addition to former prostitutes, among the followers of the water cult are many aged outcaste women who were forced to move to other areas because of the dismantlement of their *hisabetsu buraku* homes. After becoming an assistant instructor in the cult, Satoko leads these women in a ritual ceremony of purification which requires them to drink large amounts of water. The scene cited below in which Satoko talks to Yuki, a former prostitute who is also the eldest sister of Akiyuki’s step-father, demonstrates Satoko’s assumption of the ‘divine’ law.

Satoko explained that because Yuki had stocked the sediment of male poison through receiving the lustful ejaculation of innumerable men since being sold at the age of twelve by her parents because of their extreme poverty⁴⁷⁹ [...] and because she had also stored the dregs that accumulated throughout her own life of more than sixty years, her body was now a bag of poison. ‘Because the poison has damaged your eyes and changed your ears, you hear clear sounds as if they were a muddy noise, or a nightingale singing the Lotus Sutra or a cicada vibrating as someone speaking evil about you, so your mind has become warped, and you feel like saying bad things about others.’ Satoko continued in a whisper, ‘Nobody is born as a bag of poison. As the Sun God rises from the East to purify

⁴⁷⁹ Nakagami’s depiction of the age that Yuki was sold as a prostitute by her mother is varied. In *Kareki nada*, it was fifteen but *Chi no hate* suggests she was fourteen or even twelve.

the dirty night with the morning glow, so the sunshine lights up all creation to revive our innocence just like a newborn baby. When the poison starts bubbling we must find it immediately and pray to the Sun holding up our hands, or we must drink water to purify ourselves.⁴⁸⁰

Satoko's fanatic commitment to the water cult can be understood as her attempt to 'remove pollution.' Through explaining the water cult doctrine to Yuki, the aged former prostitute, Satoko expresses her own view of *kegare* and the fact that prostitutes, including herself, become 'bags of poison' because their bodies have received the 'ejaculation of lust' from countless men. Strictly speaking, Satoko inverts the common understanding of *kegare* as associated with women's bodily functions in that, from her perspective, poison, *kegare*, originates from lustful men who pass it onto prostitutes. This is a shift from the hegemonic view held by the male founder of the water cult of women themselves as innately *kegare*. Although it is represented through the masculinist 'divine' law, Satoko's explanation reveals her misandry and resistance against the patriarchy which stigmatises prostitutes as immoral. For her, *kegare* is the masculinist patriarchal law which disguises male lust by objectifying woman.

Because *Kyōdai shinjū* displays the sister's strict observance of the incest taboo, Satoko's identification with Okiyo signifies her being bound by the law of kinship and the community. This is Satoko's paradox: she hates the masculinist law as *kegare* but at the same time she conspires with the law to humiliate prostitutes and other taboo breakers as *kegare*. This paradox has a close parallel to Nakagami's view discussed in the previous chapter that '*hisabetsu sha* (people who are discriminated against) are also *sabetsu sha* (people who themselves discriminate).' Satoko's self-contempt should be seen in contrast with Akiyuki's claim that he

⁴⁸⁰ NKZ 6, p. 85.

‘can become anything’ as his desire to become nothing, which is neither *hisabetsu sha* nor *sabetsu sha*.

After Ryūzō’s enigmatic suicide, Satoko vents her anger in front of Akiyuki, his co-workers, Mon and her (Satoko’s) own mother.

‘I bet he [Ryūzō] would have paid to sleep with me, that beast!’⁴⁸¹ [...] While he cared for that daughter [Tomiko] by putting her in a treasure box so that nobody could touch her, because I was born from this simple, idiot prostitute, he had no hesitation in making this daughter pregnant. That Fly Shit wanted me to give birth to his child as if he was a stud horse and he really thought how wonderful it would be if my brother and I had children.’ Mon was choking with shock. The young men looked at Akiyuki who stood with a dark expression on his face. Kinoe [Satoko’s mother] hung her head and tried to stem the tears that were streaming down her face with her hands. ‘I’ll give birth to your child, my brother. I’ll have sex with you as if it was my first time and I’ll give birth to a child who is just like a chunk of poison.’⁴⁸²

For Satoko, both Ryūzō’s legitimate daughter, Tomiko, and Akiyuki’s lover, Noriko, are typical *hakoiri musume* (literally a daughter who is a treasure kept in a box)⁴⁸³ whose sexuality is preserved without breaking the incest taboo. Such women are highly valued in terms of the ‘traffic in women’ that is the social aim of exogamy, which in Sedgwick’s words is ‘the use of women as changeable, perhaps symbolic, property’ for the fundamental purpose of cementing male homosocial bonds. The passage above further displays Satoko’s anger at the parents who never gave her the patriarchal law as the ‘infrastructure’ necessary to save their daughter from breaking the incest taboo. In other words, her parents never acted to save Satoko from falling in

⁴⁸¹ In this sentence, Satoko uses the verb *agaru* to describe her assumption of Ryūzō’s intention to sleep with her. The term *agaru* implies a man buying a prostitute. For example, *girō ni agaru* (to go up the steps into the brothel). See ‘*agaru*’ in *Daijisen*, p. 24.

⁴⁸² NKZ 6, p. 445-446.

⁴⁸³ *Daijisen*, p. 2117-2118.

love with her brother. Nevertheless, this couple's incestuous love is, to cite Butler's words again, love that 'can only be consummated by its obliteration' and it is 'no consummation at all.'⁴⁸⁴

In fear of the fact that she committed incest, Satoko accepts the severe penance of being whipped by the founder of the cult.⁴⁸⁵ In doing so, she often refers to herself as 'clean' like a 'virgin.'⁴⁸⁶ Satoko's obsession with purity and virginity paradoxically marks her internalisation of masculinist lust, its *kegare*. Akiyuki, who feels guilty for fuelling his sister's fearful obsession with incest, speaks to Satoko in private as they are driving in a car together after Ryūzō's death:

'Are you afraid of fucking with me?' Akiyuki suddenly asked Satoko. Satoko gazed at Akiyuki. 'I have nothing to be scared of,' he said. 'I have seen a man die.' 'I have been watching you since our first meeting, my brother. I still remember you,' Satoko replied as if she was singing. 'That man who went to the other world never knew that my brother is as clean and pure as water. The ones who are so polluted that flies come buzzing around them are always women.' Suddenly feeling indignation, Akiyuki slowed the car. 'Do you think I am a man who has never been polluted?' he said. It occurred to Akiyuki that he himself had transformed entirely into Hamamura Ryūzō.⁴⁸⁷

Given her perspective of *kegare* as masculinist law, Satoko's designation of Akiyuki as 'clean and pure as water' means that he is, for her, a man who does not internalise masculinist law and is therefore able to break the taboos of incest and fratricide. Since she regards Akiyuki as 'pure,' Satoko retains her memory of Akiyuki's affection (*itoshisa*) even though this affection came during the half-brother's incestuous transgression against her, a transgression that actually disguised his Oedipal/homosocial desire for the father. In this sense, the severe purification penance that she undergoes actually serves not to remove *kegare* from herself, but from Akiyuki. We might thus read the sister's territorialisation of the brother as an attempt, *imo*-like, to

⁴⁸⁴ Butler 2000, p. 76.

⁴⁸⁵ For further detail see my discussion of the water cult in Chapter Three.

⁴⁸⁶ NKZ 6, p. 212.

⁴⁸⁷ NKZ 6, p. 446.

dominate him in their relationship. Like Antigone's adherence to the 'divine' law and Okiyo's assumption of the sacred form of the *komusō*, Satoko's fanatic adherence to the water cult also operates to establish her 'rivalry' and 'superiority' to her half-brother.⁴⁸⁸

Akiyuki knows his half-sister's feelings towards him and her fear of their violating the incest taboo. He feels resentment towards Satoko's penchant for purity which displays her melancholy as a *hisabetsu sha* but at the same time demonstrates her discriminatory tendencies as a *sabetsu sha* against those, including Akiyuki, who are regarded by the society as *kegare*. Saying that 'I have nothing to be scared of,' Akiyuki agrees to Satoko's desire to have a child with him. At the same time he knows that she is torn with fear towards the narrative of incestuous love which is impossible to realise except through its erasure. At the end of *Chi no hate*, Akiyuki leaves the area without telling anyone. Satoko sees Akiyuki's car 'driving away at high speed as if it was an expression of [his] gentleness.'⁴⁸⁹ For Satoko, Akiyuki's departure conveys the half-brother's affection and willingness to accept his sister as a whole. This includes not only her love for him but also her fear.

To conclude, Nakagami's strategy of having Satoko introduce the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative into the *Kareki nada* text presents the incestuous sister's voice expressing her desire both to territorialise her brother and to defy the patriarchal social authority of her father. Ryūzō's misogynist view of Satoko as 'useless,' however, marks the illegitimate daughter's subalternity in the male homosocial bond. Satoko's fanatic adherence to the water cult can be interpreted as the subaltern sister's vain attempt to gain a voice through internalising the divine law of the cult leader which she regards as superior to the law of human society. Her assumption of the cult's

⁴⁸⁸ Butler 2000, p. 11.

⁴⁸⁹ NKZ 6, p. 450.

‘religious’ precepts as the ‘infrastructure’ on which she will depend in order to have her voice heard represents both her self-contempt as polluted and her insistence on the supremacy of purity. This insistence also reveals her discrimination against others whom she herself stigmatises as *kegare*. For Satoko, her brother’s disappearance from the *roji* signifies a break in her attachment to *Kyōdai shinjū*, the narrative of the brother and sister double suicide which presents death as a realisation of incestuous love. Through depicting Akiyuki’s departure, Nakagami represents the brother and sister’s ultimate communication, that is, Akiyuki’s understanding of the sister’s voice – her fear of her incestuous love for him – and Satoko’s perception of the brother’s departure as his expression of affection (*itoshisa*) for her.

Chapter Five

Voice of the Burakumin Aged Women

The Perspective of the *Omina* (Old Woman)

This chapter will discuss Nakagami's representation of the old women or *oba* from the Burakumin community in Kumano. In Nakagami's narratives, aged women in the outcaste community are often referred to as *oba*. Although the term *oba* can be explained simply as a local dialectic variation of *obasan* (the middle-aged woman or aunt) or *obāsan* (the elderly woman or grandmother), I would argue that this term demonstrates the writer's expression of the geopolitical and gender idiosyncrasies of aged Burakumin women from Kumano, Japan's peripheral 'South.'

In his essay series, 'Monogatari no keifu' (1979-1985, The Genealogy of Narrative), Nakagami explains that the primitive state of *monogatari* is oral and narrated by the old woman, *omina*, sometimes known as *ōna*.⁴⁹⁰ Chapter Three explained that the term *monogatari* implies the oral tradition of people talking (*katari*) about things (*mono*) from generation to generation. As noted previously, in a 1978 public lecture delivered in Osaka, Nakagami notes that *mono* is 'soul' and *katari* is 'not only the activity of telling but also the passing down of religious precepts and historical memories.'⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ NKZ 15, p. 245.

⁴⁹¹ Nakagami 1999c, p. 225.

One essay in the ‘Monogatari no keifu’ series particularly demonstrates Nakagami’s unique interpretation of the aged woman writer, Enchi Fumiko (1905-1986), as *omina*. Through reading Enchi’s short story, ‘Fuyu no tabi – shisha to no taiwa’ (1971, Winter Trip – Dialogue with the Dead), a narrative centred around a dialogue between ‘I’ and a soul who seems to be the dead Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), Nakagami sees Enchi as an *omina* who relates tales of dead souls.⁴⁹² Nakagami’s essay refers to the scene in which ‘I’ meets the soul while searching for the Japanese script of a musical play entitled *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* (1911).⁴⁹³ Famous for the image in which he re-created the agony of the martyred saint, Mishima longed to be the tragic hero of this drama that he jointly translated.

In his discussion, Nakagami cites extensively from Enchi’s narrative, written in the year following Mishima’s sensational death. ‘I’ is the narrator, while the ‘ghost’ is apparently the spirit of the writer who took his own life:

[‘I’ said to the ghost], my homeland is different to that of Saint Sebastian, but I nevertheless have a bond with the same homeland as you, so I often think of you even though you are no longer of this world.’

‘By homeland, do you mean Japan or some different place?’

‘Well, even though there are many elements of mixed-race in you, I think our homeland is the theatre.’

I could see from his eyes that he agreed.

[...]

As I leant back against the seat of the train which sped along the *Tokaidō* line, the blurred [media] image of his dead head flashed across my mind’s eye and I also pictured the vivid

⁴⁹² NKZ15, p. 231-56.

⁴⁹³ *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* was translated from the French into Japanese in 1966 by Mishima and Ikeda Kōtarō. This was a five-act musical mystery play on the subject of Saint Sebastian written in 1911 by Gabriele D’Annunzio (1863-1938) with music by Claude Debussy (1862-1918).

form of Kumagai's wife, cradling the severed head of Atsumori (in reality her own son, Kojirō) – 'bringing the severed head to her breast' - while my ears filled with the phantom sound of a *shamisen* accompaniment to the *jōruri* chant⁴⁹⁴ [...].

For in my own strange imagination, the slash of his abdomen and severed head were forms of theatre – not the work of Sophocles, Racine or the *noh* theatre – these were the abdominal slash and the severed head of *kabuki*.

This [the *kabuki* theatre], of course, had exercised influence over him for a much longer time than [the narrative of] Saint Sebastian.⁴⁹⁵

Regarding Enchi as an *omina* and referring to her early literary activity as a dramatist, Nakagami notes her unique interpretation of Mishima's suicide from her 'theatrical perspective.' It is this perspective that results in Enchi focussing on the narrative elements of the suicide such as the 'slash of the abdomen' (*harakiri*) and the 'severed head' (*kirikubi*) in contrast to the journalistic elements such as the intrusion into the Self-Defence Force offices, the failure of the *coup d'état* or Mishima as a leader of the *Hitlerjugend*-like *Tate no kai* (1968-1970, Shield Society).⁴⁹⁶

Nakagami explains that Enchi's 'theatrical perspective' regards Mishima's death as induced by theatre, notably *kabuki* theatre, in which bloody scenes of murder, *harakiri* and

⁴⁹⁴ This passage is based on the narrative of 'Kumagai jinya' (The Kumagai Camp). This work premiered in 1751 as one of five acts in the *ningyō jōruri* play, *Ichinotani futaba gunki* (*The Tale of Two Young Warriors in the Battle of Ichinotani*). There is also a *kabuki* version of this narrative which is based on *Heike monogatari* (12th century, *The Tale of Heike*). 'Kumagai jinya' depicts the tragic encounter of the sixteen-year-old warrior, Taira no Atsumori with his enemy, Kumagai Naozane, who was fighting for the Minamoto clan. Kumagai captures Atsumori but he cannot kill the young warrior because Atsumori's mother had saved his life in the past. Out of battlefield necessity, therefore, Kumagai decapitates his own son, Kojirō, who is the same age as Atsumori. Kumagai's wife is shocked by and filled with grief at the death of her son. Kumagai, too, is deeply distressed by his deed and eventually enters the priesthood. For further detail see *Ichinotani futaba gunki* in *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* vol. 99.

⁴⁹⁵ This excerpt from Enchi's 'Fuyu no tabi: shisha to no taiwa' is cited in Nakagami's 'Monogatari no keifu' in NKZ 15, p. 232-233.

⁴⁹⁶ *Tate no kai* (1968-1971, Shield Society) was a private militia in Japan founded in 1968 in response to the New Left movement. The group was led by Mishima and dedicated to traditional Japanese values, including the veneration of the Emperor. The members of the *Tate no kai* were mainly recruited from university students who belonged to *Minzoku-ha* (Nationalist group). The group was granted the right to train with Japan's Self-Defence Force. On November 25, 1970 Mishima and four *Tate no kai* members briefly seized control of the Self-Defence Force headquarters and attempted to rally the soldiers to stage a *coup d'état* in order to restore imperial rule. When this failed, Mishima and Morita Masakatsu (1945-1970), the *Tate no kai*'s main student leader, committed suicide by *seppuku* (slashing the abdomen). For further details see Henry Scott Stokes' *The Life and Death of Yukio Mishima* (1975).

decapitation are ubiquitous. Detached from ‘reality’ by their shared theoretical perspective, both Enchi and Mishima are able to envision the beauty of bloody death. However, Mishima broke the ‘rule’ of theatre by committing real death. Nakagami reads Enchi’s indignation at the ‘reality’ of Mishima’s death in a scene in which ‘I’ cites a famous line by Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-1896) – ‘I really am a woman’ (*Makoto ni ware wa onna nari keru mono o*) – to describe her sense of loss and bereavement upon hearing of the suicide. More importantly, for Nakagami, this citation confirms Enchi’s place in a genealogy of female (*joryū*) writers who retained abundant knowledge about and insight into *monogatari* but who were still marginalised from the mainstream of Japanese literature at the time of the publication of Enchi’s narrative. Through reading Enchi’s narrative of the dead ‘soul,’ Nakagami observes the power of *omina*’s narrative to reveal the violent nature of *monogatari*.

In terms of his view of *monogatari* as female narrating, Nakagami’s notion of *omina* also resonates with the story-telling legends told by Shihi no Omina (7-8th century) and Hieda no Are (7-8th century). The former was a female servant of the Empress Jitō (645-702). Their dialogue in the form of a thirty-one syllable poem in *Man’yōshū* demonstrates the significance of the female story-teller in ancient times.⁴⁹⁷ The latter is known for being instrumental in the compilation of *Kojiki*. Although the sex of Hieda no Are is uncertain, s/he is assumed by scholars such as Yanagita Kunio and Saigō Nobutsuna (1916-2008) to be a female shaman.⁴⁹⁸ In

⁴⁹⁷ Below are the translated poems of Empress Jitō and Shihi no Omina taken from Hideo Levy’s *The Ten Thousand Leaves* (1981), p. 151-152.

Poem given by the Empress to the old woman Shihi:

Lately I do not hear/ the talk that Shihi forces on me, / though I tell her, ‘Stop,’/ and now I long for it.

Poem presented by the old woman Shihi in response:

Though I say, ‘I want to stop,’/ you command me, ‘Speak! Speak!’/ So Shihi speaks, and then you say/ I force it on you!

⁴⁹⁸ See Yanagita 1990, p. 288-304 and Saigō 1973, p. 9-56.

Nakagami's words, *omina* was a 'key station' of knowledge and information and a 'teller of *kotonoha* [words] and *kotodama* [word souls]' in the ancient community of Japan.⁴⁹⁹

Nakagami argues that the source of *monogatari* is the *omina*'s marginalisation, which I interpret as subalternity. He calls *omina* the 'fictional mother' and also the 'inverted great mother.'

Through appropriating the perspective of the fictional mother, that is, the inverted great mother who is the marginalised mother, we can escape the western model of binary opposites which have, without resistance, overrun the modern world. We can thereby discover the presence of decay which is, just like the twist of the Möbius strip, apparent as the other side of the sublimity of the life force. We can also see the power of the old woman who exists on the border, and beyond the border, of this world and the next [...] and who thus renews this world.⁵⁰⁰

Nakagami's terms 'fictional mother' and 'inverted great mother' are used in association with the phenomenon of aging, that is, the infertility of the aged woman and her consequent 'marginalised' status in the community. For Nakagami, communal practices such as *ubasute* (abandoning the aged) and cannibalism are the root of religion and rituals, rituals that return the power of the life of the aged to the whole community.⁵⁰¹

Nakagami's depiction of the voice of the Burakumin aged women can be considered as an application of the concept of *omina* in his literary representation of the Burakumin community. Although she points out that the 'true' subaltern is 'gender-unspecified,' I have noted in Chapter One that Spivak suggests that the typical case of 'the foreclosed native informant' is 'the poorest woman of the South.'⁵⁰² Drawing on Spivak's view, my textual

⁴⁹⁹ NKZ 15, p. 245.

⁵⁰⁰ NKZ 15, p. 249.

⁵⁰¹ NKZ 15, p. 248-249.

⁵⁰² Spivak 1999, p. 6.

analysis in this chapter will discuss Nakagami as a writer (the educated native informant) who tries to ‘represent’ the voice of the foreclosed and gendered Burakumin aged women (*oba*).

‘Foreclosed’ Native Informant and Aged Burakumin Women

Before examining Nakagami’s depiction of voice of the Burakumin aged women as an application of the concept of *omina* in his literary representation of the Burakumin community, I will refer again to Spivak’s perspective explained briefly in Chapter One, of the ‘foreclosed native informant’ from ‘the South.’ Spivak notes an aporia in being a ‘native informant,’ that is, a representative of a native community in the sense that an informant’s discourse possibly forecloses the voice of the most oppressed people who have no infrastructure to express (represent) themselves in society. In her discussion of the voice of the silenced subaltern Spivak suggests that new forms of ‘neo-colonial’ oppression for silenced groups and individuals are created not only by the discourses of intellectuals but also by information given by ‘native informants’ from ‘the South’ who represent the ‘native’ voice in a manner that assists ‘the North’ and its dominance. In this context, the native informant can be understood as the ‘self-marginalizing’ and yet ‘self-consolidating’ postcolonial subject. In other words, the voice of such a postcolonial subject unavoidably supports the domination of the ‘South’ by the ‘North’ because the voice that this subject produces is based on the North’s idea of ‘binarism.’ This discriminatory ideology justifies the hierarchies of meaning inherent in pairs such as centre/periphery and culture/nature,⁵⁰³ which, in fact, produce new forms of oppression for the marginalised. As noted in the opening lines of the thesis, this mechanism is what I call ‘the paradox of representing the silenced voice.’⁵⁰⁴ My aim is to investigate Nakagami as a writer

⁵⁰³ Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2002, p. 18-21.

⁵⁰⁴ Also see my discussion in Chapter One.

who, while aware of this paradox, carefully attempts to represent the silenced voice of the socially stigmatised. This he does without complying with the hegemony or ideology of ‘the North,’ or the mainstream, which discriminates against ‘the South,’ or the subaltern (Burakumin) space.

Although she points out that the ‘true’ subaltern is ‘gender-unspecified,’⁵⁰⁵ I have noted that Spivak suggests that the typical case of ‘the foreclosed native informant’ is ‘the poorest woman of the South.’⁵⁰⁶ Drawing on Spivak’s view, my textual analysis in the next section will discuss Nakagami as a writer (the educated native informant) who tries to ‘represent’ the voice of the foreclosed and gendered Burakumin aged women (*oba*). In depicting this voice in his narratives, Nakagami profiles the various forms of power relationships that exist among members of the outcaste community, and also between the community and the outside. I will investigate how Nakagami ‘inscribes’ – or produces – narratives about the marginalised without ‘self-marginalizing’ or ‘self-consolidating’ and also without fostering the discriminatory mainstream thought that can re-create the oppressed subject. In doing so, I will argue that a key strategy in achieving this is the invocation of the *omina*’s voice.

***Sen’nen no yuraku*: The Subaltern Burakumin Narrative**

Sen’nen no yuraku, a collection of six linked stories, was serialised from 1980 to 1982 and published in book form in 1982. I have discussed the fact that, in spite of receiving the Akutagawa Prize in 1976, Nakagami did not intentionally reveal his Burakumin background until the late 1970s. Accordingly, his early published work makes no direct reference to discriminatory practices against Japan’s outcaste group. Contrary to this earlier material,

⁵⁰⁵ Spivak 1999, p. 272.

⁵⁰⁶ Spivak 1999, p. 6.

however, *Sen'nen no yuraku* (and also *Chi no hate* which was written around the same time) demonstrates a determination by Nakagami to depict the Burakumin as a group who, as a result of the Japanese aversion to impurity, are socially stigmatised as *kegare*. These texts, therefore, provide an account of many historical elements of discrimination against *hisabetsu buraku* dwellers.

Although the stories collected in *Sen'nen no yuraku* do not follow a set chronology, the narrative spans approximately thirty years, beginning in the Japanese imperial era and continuing into the postwar era. Each of the *Sen'nen no yuraku* narratives features one of six beautiful young men of the Nakamoto clan who were born into a segregated *roji* community. Traditionally, this marginalised Shingū community was called *Nagayama* (long hill) by non-Kasuga people (both Burakumin and non-Burakumin) because the district was situated behind the long hill of Garyūzan.⁵⁰⁷ The term, *Nagayama*, carried a discriminative and derogatory connotation. The disdain of outsiders for the *roji* is frequently depicted in *Sen'nen no yuraku*. The citation below is a scene from 'Hanzō no tori' (translated by Ian Hideo Levy as Hanzo's Bird). This is the opening story of *Sen'nen no yuraku* and depicts a conversation between a Hanzō, a young man from the *roji* (hereafter Hanzo, due to the spelling used in the English translation of the text), and a man from outside.

'We're going in different directions,' said Hanzo [to the man]. 'I'm going to turn up the mountain road from the Ukishima brothel, then head down to the alley on the other side.' The man looked astonished. 'You're from Nagayama?' he asked, giving another name for the alley. 'You're from Nagayama?' he repeated, interested that Hanzo was from the ghetto of outcastes, the jumble of cattle skimmers and sandal repairers and basket weavers. With a sudden air of condescension he told him, 'You're a good-looking man.'⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁷ Garyūzan means a mountain of a lying dragon.

⁵⁰⁸ Nakagami 1982, p. 18. This is an excerpt from *Hanzo's Bird* which is an English translation (translated by Hideo

The passage above demonstrates the high ‘visibility’ of the social difference between Burakumin and non-Burakumin in Shingū society before urbanisation, and the obliteration of the long hill of Garyūzan along with the Kasuga *buraku* in line with the 1970s/1980s government funded redevelopment of *hisabetsu buraku* areas throughout Japan. This visibility was entrenched by the spatial division between the *buraku* and non-*buraku* sections of the city.

The Burakumin *Omina* and Myth of the Outcaste Clan

All of the male protagonists of the Nakamoto clan in *Sen’nen no yuraku* live excessively lustful or violent lives involving activities such as theft, rape, murder and substance abuse. Furthermore, each dies an early death by his own hand or at the hands of others. They are either illegitimate children or children who, neglected by their own families, are raised collectively by the *roji* community. In this respect, a major role is played by the community midwife, an elderly woman known as Oryū no oba. Having brought each *roji* child into the world, she is depicted in the text as the mother figure for the ‘orphaned’ Nakamoto boys. Her role is encapsulated in Nakagami’s observation that the Burakumin district is ‘a maternal place.’⁵⁰⁹

In his narratives of the *roji*, Nakagami who had a strong consciousness of the events of 1910/11 High Treason Incident often alludes to the historical figure of local priest of the Jōdo Shinshū Jōsenji Temple, Takagi Kenmyō (1864-1914). Takagi was sentenced to life imprisonment for his alleged role in the incident.⁵¹⁰ One of six defendants from Shingū, Takagi

Levy in 1982) of ‘Hanzō no tori,’ one of six short stories in *Sen’nen no yuraku*.

⁵⁰⁹ Nakagami and Abe 1995, p. 63.

⁵¹⁰ As noted in Chapter One, the 1910/11 High Treason Incident saw twelve men (including Shingū doctor Ōishi Seinosuke and anarcho-socialist Kōtoku Shūsui) executed and another twelve imprisoned for life on the fabricated

was known for the compassion he demonstrated towards the Burakumin communities in Shingū. Immediately after the Incident he was expelled from the head temple, Higashi Honganji, and committed suicide in Akita Prison in 1914. The High Treason Incident victims were politically tainted and in *Sen'nen no yuraku* Oryū no oba, the wife of Reijo, the priest who, in the novel, took over the temple after the Incident, is also depicted as a figure marginalised by this taint.

Nakagami characterises the midwife, Oryū no oba, and Reijo, her husband, as representative of the most stigmatised members of society during the time of Japan's Imperial project. Oryū no oba was a bereaved mother whose three-year-old son died after accidentally 'spilling a bowl of tea gruel over his head.'⁵¹¹ From the perspective of the *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) and *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong military) ideologies that dominated at the time, Oryū no oba failed to raise her son to fight in the name of the emperor and was therefore not qualified to be a respectable mother. Reijo was a lay Buddhist priest known contemptuously as a *kebōzu* (hair priest). The term derived from the fact that, while ordained priests shaved their heads, *kebōzu* did not. These men were further disparaged since, rather than having the wages of a temple priest, they continued working in their former occupations which were often associated with impoverished rural work.⁵¹² Previously a shoemaker, Reijo abandoned his trade to become a priest after the priest of the local Jōsenji Temple (based on the real-life figure of Takagi), who ministered compassionately to and sympathised with the plight of the *roji* community, was convicted of having plotted to assassinate the emperor, 'the very Son of

charge of plotting to assassinate the Emperor Meiji.

⁵¹¹ Nakagami 1982, p. 2.

⁵¹² For further detail see Yanagita's essay entitled 'Kebōzu kō' (1915-1916, An Essay on Kebōzu Priests) in *Yanagita Kunio zenshū* 11, p. 419-546.

Heaven'⁵¹³ and sentenced to life imprisonment,

In *Sen'nen no yuraku*, Nakagami presents not only taboos of discrimination but also the sexual taboos that define the patriarchal context. These taboos include female infidelity, a widow's sexual relations (in war-time Japan, particularly, a widow was expected to remain chaste in honour of her dead husband) and homosexuality. Nakagami, however, demonstrates the absurdity of these taboos which, in addition to being completely disregarded by many in the *roji*, are equally disregarded by those outside the *roji* who engage in illicit relations with *roji* dwellers in order to express their sexual identities that have been suppressed by hegemonic norms. This view is distinctively represented in the amoral voice of Oryū no oba, the 'inverted great mother' of the segregated community.

Since sex – with violence and religion – is considered by Nakagami to be one of three elements that contribute to the social construction of discrimination, the writer presents these sexual contexts to depict systematic discrimination. 'Hanzō no tori' features extensive images of the lustful sexual activities that involve the hero (Hanzo) who is from the *roji*, a widow who lives in the Ukishima area of Shingū, and a man from outside the *roji*. In addition to his hometown being a site of narratives of 'treason,' for Nakagami, the city of Shingū is a site of narratives about sex. A castle town during the Tokugawa era, Shingū was both a centre of the lumber industry and a site passed through by Kumano pilgrims. Borrowing from a key term used by both Nakagami and Karatani in their perspective of Shingū's society and culture, we can refer

⁵¹³ Nakagami 1982, p. 6.

to Shingū as a place of ‘*kōtsū*’ (intercourse) – both sexual and relating to travel and trade – between various kinds of people from different backgrounds.⁵¹⁴

In the Ukishima area, there is a small floating island called ‘Ukishima no mori’ (Floating Island Forest) which consists of a mass of floating aquatic plants, mud and peat. The precinct near this island was registered as a red-light district from 1912 to 1958.⁵¹⁵ The Ukishima floating island forest is the site of a legend about an *iruikon* (marriage between two different species, usually a human and an animal) between a beautiful young girl called Oino and a large male snake. ‘Jasei no in’ (Lust of the White Serpent, 1776), a story from *Ugetsu monogatari* (1776, *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*), a collection of supernatural tales by the canonical Tokugawa era writer, Ueda Akinari (1734-1809) can be read as a variant of the Ukishima legend. While Akinari’s ‘Jasei no in’ is set in Shingū, he reverses the gender of the couple from the Ukishima legend to tell the tale of an *iruikon* between a beautiful young man (Toyo’o) and a female snake. Nakagami reads ‘Jasei no in’ as Akinari’s critical view of the original legend: Akinari writes to challenge the supremacy of masculine virility by depicting a naïve man as a protagonist at the mercy of female desire, a man who desperately tries to escape from an *iruikon* taboo.⁵¹⁶

If Akinari’s text contests the conventional narrative of the helpless woman and the dangerous male, ‘Hanzō no tori’ can be read as Nakagami’s critique of both the Ukishima legend and Akinari’s ‘Jasei no in.’ In Nakagami’s interpretation, all are equal participants in the acts of sexual excess depicted so that neither Hanzo, nor the widow, nor the man is constructed as a

⁵¹⁴ See Nakagami and Karatani’s views of ‘*kōtsū*’ in their exchange entitled *Kobayashi Hideo o koete (Overcoming Kobayashi Hideo)*. Nakagami and Karatani 1979, p. 7-105.

⁵¹⁵ NKZ 15, p. 177.

⁵¹⁶ NKZ 15, p. 177.

victim in their sexual activities. However, once the context of discrimination is introduced – when the man discriminates against Hanzo by labelling him as an outcaste – Hanzo cannot help feeling inferior. His response is to himself adopt mainstream discriminatory attitudes towards same-sex male eroticism. In response to the man’s condescending comment about his good looks, Hanzo thinks:

He could see toying with women and being toyed with by them, but to have a man, and an outsider, toying with him because of his good looks, just like a homosexual – no thanks. Hanzo spat on the road. He felt just like some pretty boy [*yasa otoko*] who had sold his body for the sake of his friend in the alley. His pride was hurt, and he kept spitting as he climbed the mountain path back to the alley.⁵¹⁷

Here Nakagami depicts the disturbing paradox of the marginalised individual himself demonstrating a marginalising response. Unlike the hero in ‘Jasei no in,’ ultimately Hanzo never escapes from the attraction of female desire and brings disaster on himself by ‘toying with women and being toyed with by them.’ He eventually dies when stabbed in the back by a furious man from outside the *roji*. This depiction contains yet another paradox: while he is a victim of violence, which apparently relates to discrimination, Hanzo brings about his death by his own violation of taboos. Violence, which Nakagami sees as one of three elements of discrimination, also becomes ‘visible’ through the narrative of the outcaste man who breaks patriarchal taboos in society.

In addition to intertextuality with the local legend and the Edo narrative, Nakagami alludes to the geopolitical and historical oppression of Kumano by the hegemonic centre through depicting Oryū no oba’s consciousness as a silenced voice from the ‘South.’ While not the formal narrator of *Sen’nen no yuraku*, Oryū no oba nevertheless plays a key role in providing

⁵¹⁷ Nakagami 1982, p. 18.

observations that weave the text together. Her narratorial role has been the subject of lengthy discussion in Nakagami criticism. As Karlsson points out, she is *not* the narrator even though her consciousness orients significant sections of the narratives.⁵¹⁸ In reading *Sen'nen no yuraku*, we should firstly note that the novel is written as a third-person narrative and Oryū no oba's consciousness and recollections about the Nakamoto clan are intermittently inserted throughout the text. The following is an example:

[Oryū no oba thinks] As some in the hamlet said, the Nakamoto blood perhaps came from the [exiled] clan defeated by the Minamotos in the Battle of Yashima⁵¹⁹ [...], it was this stagnant blood that made them spend their days and nights on music and dance, never thinking of the need to work hard to survive, lacking the spirit to meet the challenge of those who opposed them, tiring easily of whatever they might have been doing, and, although so poor that they could not buy food, helplessly drawn to having fun, drinking and indulging in the fragrance of women's make-up. [...]

However, Oryū no oba knew that these reasons alone could not explain the fact that it was only Nakamoto men who died young or became sickly. Although, knowing that it would be easier for the young men to understand [their] destiny [as descendants of a cursed clan], she could have told them that it was because seven or ten generations ago some immoral man had cut out a beast's stomach that held a foetus, or had driven away a man who asked for water, unaware that the man was an incarnation of the Buddha; but she also knew that nothing she might say could halt the gradual decay, one by one, of the Nakamoto boys, with their blood that was so sacred because so thoroughly impure.⁵²⁰

Referring to Oryū no oba as 'the data-bank of the *roji*,' Asada notes that this illiterate midwife 'remembers all the dates of the births and deaths of the people' in her segregated community.⁵²¹ Her consciousness of the tragic destiny of the Nakamoto men is foregrounded through her references to the local oral communal folklore of ancient nobles in political exile (*kishu ryūritan*),

⁵¹⁸ Karlsson 2009, p. 162-164.

⁵¹⁹ The Battle of Yashima (*Yashima no tatakai*) is the 1185 battle between the Minamoto clan (Genji) and the Taira clan (Heishi) at Yashima in Sanuki (old name of the area around Kagawa Prefecture). In fleeing from the Minamotos, the Tairas were defeated again by troops led by Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159-1189). The Battle of Yashima is the penultimate battle between these two samurai families. The Taira clan fell at Dan'noura in the Shimonoseki Straits. This last battle brought the fall of the Taira (1185). See *Daijisen*, p. 2659.

⁵²⁰ NKZ 5, p. 42-43.

⁵²¹ Asada 1996, p. 29.

of travelling entertainers, of bullies who refused to give aide to Kūkai (774-835), the famous itinerant priest, or of those who broke the Buddhist taboo against killing animals. These legendary people were traditionally regarded as *kegare* by the hegemonic centre.

In *Sen'nen no yuraku*, the main Burakumin characters are represented as embodiments of various paradoxes, including purity/impurity and centre/periphery.⁵²² While the Nakamoto men belong to the most beautiful clan idolised by women from their community, they are also stigmatised by the wider society as polluted outcasts. This strong sense of paradox is represented in Nakagami's depiction of the blood of the Nakamoto men as 'so sacred' because it is so thoroughly 'impure.' As previously noted, Spivak suggests that the typical case of 'the foreclosed native informant' is 'the poorest woman of the South'⁵²³ with her 'imagined (im)possible perspective.'⁵²⁴ Drawing on Spivak's view, the poorest old woman of Japan's 'South,' Oryū no oba, can also be regarded as a native informant whose voice, from the mainstream perspective, is foreclosed as absurd and paradoxical.

While aware of the beauty of the Nakamoto men, Oryū no oba also assesses them as having 'no endurance.' Observing both their social and physical flaws, she thinks that 'even though they may be too poor to buy food, [they] could not help having fun, drinking and indulging themselves the fragrance of a woman's make-up.'⁵²⁵ In reference to the Nakamoto men, 'yasa otoko' is a word used throughout the narrative. This is a term that recalls the attributes of the male protagonist of 'Jasei no in.' Featuring the spoilt son of a wealthy fishermen in Shingū,

⁵²² Drawing on Rosalie Colie's *Paradoxica Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (1966), Eve Zimmerman also discusses Nakagami's use of 'the power of paradox' as the 'ability' to 'upset the categories by which we organise our world.' See Zimmerman 1999, p. 130-152. In his Ph.D dissertation, Takayashiki Masahito examines Nakagami's act of writing as a demonstration of the paradox between self-identification and integration into the collective. See Takayashiki 2007, p. 42-48.

⁵²³ Spivak 1999, p. 6.

⁵²⁴ Spivak 1999, p. 9.

⁵²⁵ Spivak 1999, p. 9.

‘Jasei no in’ is traditionally read as an account of the ordeal of a *yasa otoko* who is desired by a female snake. The young man, Toyo’o, is introduced in Akinari’s text as follows:

Toyo’o, the third child, was a handsome youth with a predilection for learning and cultural pursuits typical of life in Kyoto, the nation’s capital. He had no desire or inclination to devote his time and efforts to the family occupation.⁵²⁶

Although normative masculinity in the Tokugawa era incorporated a love for the arts, the defining element was the physical ferocity of the samurai. Thus, while lauding a man’s good looks, the term *yasa otoko* had a negative connotation in that it critiqued the mild-mannered love of the arts that signals a lack of vitality and hegemonic masculinity. Masculine beauty, which is associated with social marginality, is the main attribute of the Nakamoto men depicted in *Sen’nen no yuraku*.

By profiling the paradox of the beauty of the Nakamoto men, Nakagami also profiles both the exclusionary nature of communities and the often exclusionary nature of social identification *within* communities. This view can be read in Nakagami’s depiction of the repair of Japanese traditional sandals (*geta* and *zōri*) as a monopoly of the Nakamoto clan. As seen in the case of Reijo, occupations related to footwear such as shoemakers and footwear repairers were often occupied by Burakumin. Because of this, these people were ostracised by mainstream society as *kegare*. However, Nakagami also demonstrates that exclusionary practices existed even within the Burakumin community. In *Sen’nen no yuraku*, one of the six Nakamoto men, Shin’ichirō, is a footwear repairman. He is a thief but in order to divert suspicion away from his illegal activities, he asks to join the guild of footwear repairers in the *roji*. Since the Nakamoto clan was one of the oldest in the community, in spite of his criminal activities Shin’ichirō is

⁵²⁶ Ueda 1972 (translated by Kenji Hamada), p. 20.

immediately given membership of the guild by the senior footwear repairmen who encourage him to ‘reform himself’ through this traditional job.⁵²⁷ Relating Shin’ichirō’s easy entry into the guild of *roji* footwear repairers, Oryū no oba’s memory also narrates the attitude of longstanding residents of the *roji* who, while they embrace a local criminal, try to exclude newcomers from the occupational monopoly that they control. By depicting the tensions that arise through this kind of conflict, Nakagami provides insights into the exclusionary system of binary opposites which exists within all communities, including the Burakumin community.

Discrimination against the weaker pair of a binary, such as periphery or impurity, inevitably occurs in the establishment of social identification. The weaker pair is excluded from the privileged mainstream which demands a consistent and exclusionary identification with the power components of the group. However, the Nakamoto men – who are both beautiful *and* impure, both part of the *roji* centre and the mainstream marginalised – present a paradox that contests this usual practice. Furthermore, this paradox cannot be represented through conventional narratorial practices but only through narration by a ‘silenced’ voice. In this text, the silenced voice is that of the social pariah, the *omina*, Oryū no oba. Oppressed by the mainstream, the stigmatised voice must inevitably narrate paradoxically.

The Burakumin Women after Dismantlement of the Community

Although *Sen’nen no yuraku* and *Chi no hate* were written around the same time, *Sen’nen no yuraku* includes the voice of the *omina*, Oryū no oba, who gathers the threads of *roji* legends related to the cursed beauty of outcaste men. *Chi no hate*, however, displays the world

⁵²⁷ NKZ 5, p. 151.

after the death of the Burakumin *omina*. In *Chi no hate*, the *roji* has disappeared and been transformed into grassland through the capitalist project of urbanisation. Because most former *roji* residents have been evicted and forced to move to other places, there is no one to commemorate the second anniversary of Oryū no oba's death. The death of this community 'mother' implies the end of the mythical 'maternal place' of the *roji*.

In the place of Oryū no oba, the data bank of the community, the women featured in *Chi no hate*, are former prostitutes such as Satoko and Yuki. These women replace Akiyuki's mother and sister, Fusa and Mie, who appear as central characters in the first two volumes of the Akiyuki trilogy. While Fusa and Mie are recognised as women from the *roji* community even after they leave the area, neither Satoko nor Yuki have such legitimacy. Satoko is regarded as a single outcaste woman who lives in the entertainment district of Shingū without belonging to any community other than the water cult. Yuki is, strictly speaking, not a *roji* woman because she is the eldest sister of the Takehara clan (to which the husband of Akiyuki's mother belongs), an outcaste family from outside the Kasuga *roji*. In the sense that she frequents the *roji* to circulate rumours, Yuki can nevertheless be seen as a member of the subaltern community. As noted, Yuki is also a follower of the water cult, instructed by Satoko. While 'Misaki,' *Kareki nada* and *Sen'nen no yuraku* display the *roji* women (Fusa, Mie and Oryū no oba) whose voices endlessly reminisce about the memory of the dead men from the Nakamoto clan,⁵²⁸ *Chi no hate* presents the wandering former prostitutes whose voices are never given a hearing by those with power within the outcaste community.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ In *Sen'nen no yuraku*, Akiyuki's brother, Ikuo who died at the age of twenty-four, is depicted in the genealogy of the Nakamoto clan because his father (Fusa's first husband who also died young) is one of the sons of the clan.

However, Ikuo only appears sparingly in the trilogy.
⁵²⁹ Satoko apparently values herself as the younger sister (*imōto*) of her brother, Akiyuki, while Yuki constructs her

The following discussion will focus on Nakagami's depiction of the aged outcaste sister, Yuki. I will consider Yuki as an *oba* who, unlike Oryū no oba, is never able to become *omina*, a narrator of the *monogatari*. This inability can be explained in terms of the invalidation, when the community is erased, of the role of narrator who passes down the legends and memories of the community to the younger generation. I will focus here particularly on Yuki's internalisation of hegemonic concepts such as patriarchy and *kegare*, attributes that mark her as significantly different from Oryū no oba who unconditionally embraces *kegare* and amorally accepts any social transgression and deviancy.

Voice of the Burakumin Eldest Sister

Yuki is the eldest sister of Akiyuki's stepfather, Takehara Shigezō. In *Kareki nada* and *Chi no hate*, she appears as a lonely aged widow who is disliked by her family and, in fact, the entire community because of her fastidious gossipy nature, her indulgence in long monologues about her own tragic past, and her continual boasting about the prosperity of the Takehara family. The eldest daughter of six siblings, her father died when she was a child, leaving her outcaste family living in abject poverty. Her mother eventually sold Yuki when she was about fifteen to a brothel in Ise, situated in the North of the Kii peninsula. The site since ancient times of the principal Shinto shrine, Ise also had a thriving licensed quarter.

Although Yuki is in her mid-sixties and called *oba* by her community, her male acquaintances such as Ryūzō and Akiyuki sometimes refer to her as *ine*. In Nakagami's narrative, young Burakumin woman characters are often called *ine*. The use of this term for the older single

identity as an eldest sister (*ane*) who sacrificed herself to support her family.

woman Yuki, however, has derogatory connotations such as found in the English term, ‘old maid.’ Yuki as an *ine* importantly demonstrates the presence in the *roji* of the Burakumin aged woman who is an eldest sister who formerly did sex work as a prostitute (*jorō*) to support her poor family after the father’s death. In his essay ‘Monogatari no keifu,’ Nakagami uses the *kanji* 姐 to identify the *ine* as a woman who has ‘reproductive ability’⁵³⁰ thus distinguishing her from *imo* (sister, young woman) or *oba* (aunt, aged woman). Although *ine* can simply be explained as a phonetic variation of *ane*, I would argue that the difference between *ane* and *ine* is in fact a difference of standard language and local dialect. In other words, this term marks the previously discussed geopolitical binary oppositions of hegemonic ‘North’ and peripheral ‘South.’ Hence, *ine* is a term particularly used for mature young women in Nakagami’s narrative of the marginalised ‘South.’ Why, then, is this term used in reference to Yuki?

Key features in Nakagami’s depiction of the *ine* include being a daughter from a fatherless outcaste family, being a loyal sister for her brothers, being a migrant worker who supports her mother and siblings (often through sex work), and being a determinedly ‘tomboyish’⁵³¹ woman. Apart from Yuki, the character in the Akiyuki trilogy who most clearly displays these *ine* characteristics is the protagonist’s eldest half-sister, Yoshiko. When she was fifteen, Yoshiko migrated to a silk factory near Nagoya where she worked to support her fatherless family. Some years later she married the son, an heir of the silk mill. Although the married Yoshiko becomes isolated both physically and mentally from her family and the *roji* community, the aging, single Yuki intensifies her attachment to and sense of responsibility towards her blood family.

⁵³⁰ NKZ 15, p. 247-249.

⁵³¹ NKZ 3, p. 210.

It is significant that the eldest daughter in the fatherless Burakumin family often assumes the role of both father and mother to other family members. This can be seen in the passage below:

By the time her first younger brother, the eldest son of the family, became financially independent as an engineering contractor and was able to come to ransom her, Yuki had already spent the spring time of her life as a prostitute. She saw the marriage of each of her three younger brothers – the eldest son [Jin'ichirō], the second son [Shigezō] and the youngest son – and also of her two younger sisters. After being redeemed by her first younger brother, Yuki met a man who, though well aware of her prostitute past, fell in love with her. When they decided to marry, the war escalated. The man was drafted. The eldest and second sons were drafted, too. [...] The second son's wife ran off with a travelling entertainer leaving behind the baby, Fumiaki [Akiyuki's older step-brother]. Yuki became Fumiaki's carer. She often worried that the wife's departure needed to be kept secret from the second son so that he did not do something reckless like rebel against the government or lose the desire to fight in the war. [...]

After the war ended, the eldest son and the second son returned. Eventually, the second son met Fusa who had five children. The following year, Yuki also started a so-called family. The man was ten years older than her and died five years later. She never became pregnant. She really thought that she was the only one who had been dogged by constant misfortune. As things returned to normal after the war and people emerged from poverty and forgot hunger, each of her three younger brothers and two sisters soon forgot how they had trampled on Yuki's life. She often thought how they had no idea who had helped make them what they were today. She felt that her five siblings, and their partners and even their mistresses, despised her because of her past life as a prostitute.⁵³²

The reference to her three brothers as the first, second and youngest 'sons' implies Yuki's parental role in the family. When she accepts her weeping mother's request that she become a prostitute, Yuki becomes a substitute for the patriarch whose role is to support the family. This was also the moment when Yuki, the daughter, surpassed her aged mother as a mature woman in both economic and sexual potency. Internalising her mother's desire for the reconstruction of a patriarchal family (*ie*), Yuki supports her male siblings' coming of age by sacrificing her own

⁵³² NKZ 3, p. 267-268.

chance to be a respectable wife and mother. Seen in this context, it is not necessarily surprising that those who do not have a role in the succession of the Takehara family, such as her two younger sisters and her dead husband, are seemingly less important for her than her brothers. Although she sees her past as miserable, Yuki feels proud of her contribution to the Takehara family and, because of her strong attachment to her blood kinship, she remains an *ine* even when her age marks her as an *oba*.

When we consider Yuki as a target of *kuchi berashi* (reducing the number of mouths a family needs to feed), her position as the eldest sister who displayed signs of maturity first among her siblings marks her misfortune. In this context, Yuki can be seen as one of many eldest Asian daughters despatched to work in the sex industry. These girls and young women feature in Matsui Yayori's 1985 report entitled 'Ajia no baishun chitai o iku' (Investigating Precincts of Prostitution in Asia) in which the author reports that, significantly, there are more eldest daughters than daughters of other sibling rank working as prostitutes in tourist destinations and military bases in Asian countries such as Thailand and the Philippines.⁵³³ Yuki and these Asian prostitutes can be commonly regarded as the most subaltern daughters from the marginalised 'South.'

As seen in the long passage cited above, Yuki's voice, expressed in the form of rambling memories and thoughts, are often presented as third person narration rather than depicted as an actual speaking voice that is heard and responded to by another person. This signifies that her voice is trapped in the framework of the patriarchal narrative which is internalised by both Yuki as a speaker and the people of the *roji* as listeners. Even though this demonstrates her assenting to convention, Yuki is trapped by this convention so that her voice

⁵³³ Matsui 2009, p. 215-228.

echoes in vain throughout a community that regards this aged single former prostitute as deviant. Nakagami's depiction of Yuki's voice can be divided into two main elements: rumours or information about others and the silenced voice that tries to speak its own story. The first implies her desire to be the narrator (*katarite* or *omina*) of the community while the second demonstrates her interiority which cannot help but identify itself as 'trampled' and ultimately polluted.

The 'Vagina Monologue' of the Burakumin Aged Woman

In this section I will undertake a close examination of Yuki's tale about the rape of a twelve-year-old intellectually handicapped girl (*hakuchi*, literally idiot) who lives in the *roji* with her grandmother. In her monologues, Yuki tries to become an 'informant' of the pain felt by the immature vagina of this 'idiot' girl.⁵³⁴ The intellectually handicapped girl is also a key character who demonstrates Nakagami's view of the gendered Burakumin woman whose voice is silenced. I will argue that, in circulating the narrative of the girl's pain, Yuki is also trying to speak her own pain as an adolescent prostitute.

The rape in question occurs when the 'idiot' girl is sexually molested by Tōru, the son of the eldest Takehara son (Jin'ichirō) and his mistress. Tōru is therefore Yuki's nephew; he is also Akiyuki's cousin and co-worker in the business run by Akiyuki's stepfather. Akiyuki and Tōru have sympathised with each other since they were children because of their similarly awkward positions as illegitimate sons in the Takehara family. Akiyuki is furthermore the only person who actually saw Tōru and the girl together at the time that the rape is said to have been committed. Although Akiyuki keeps this secret, rumours soon circulate within the *roji* about

⁵³⁴ NKZ 6, p. 292.

Tōru's deed. By the time the girl's pregnancy becomes obvious, Yuki also knows that it was Tōru who molested the girl. In the *roji*, some people start talking about supernatural phenomena involving the girl such as 'after the girl was beaten by her grandmother she began to shine and float in the air, smashing the household Buddhist altar.' In their fear of the girl's 'powers,' people tell the angry grandmother who is trying to find the rapist that 'when Tōru went up to the hill, the idiot girl followed.' When the pregnancy runs its course and a child is born, although she is aware of Tōru's guilt, Yuki's desire to protect the Takehara name sees her shift blame to the outsider, Akiyuki.⁵³⁵

[...] after a while, the idiot girl gave birth to a child as if it was the height of her humiliation. When the baby was sent to Tōru and his mother, even though Yuki knew that it was Tōru's baby, she felt deceived [...]. She tried to believe that it was Akiyuki who had made Tōru responsible [...]. [B] ecause Akiyuki had been brought to stay at Shigezō's house as Fusa's child, Yuki openly blamed him for the rape of the idiot who was as innocent as the god and Buddha – the girl might have had her first period, but to play with a virgin vagina that was not ready to accept a man [...] was beyond the pale of human behaviour.⁵³⁶

Since Tōru is one of the sons of her family, Yuki seeks to make Akiyuki her scapegoat. In addition to being no blood relation to the family, he is also known as the killer of his stepbrother Hideo. During the three years of Akiyuki's imprisonment, and in spite of the fact that everyone in the community knows the truth of the matter Yuki circulates her fabricated story. After Tōru suffers a nervous breakdown, Yuki becomes like a devoted mother, treating Tōru himself as an 'idiot child,' thinking that otherwise she cannot remain in the community.⁵³⁷ Yuki's sense of responsibility towards Tōru and her desire to excuse his deed demonstrates her position in her family which is not only that of father and wife, that is, mother, but also, recalling Antigone who

⁵³⁵ NKZ 6, p. 292.

⁵³⁶ NKZ 6, p. 292.

⁵³⁷ NKZ 6, p. 292.

is the daughter and sister of Oedipus in the ancient Greek play, her brothers' wife. It is she who cares for her nephews (Fumiaki and Tōru) instead of their incompetent mothers. Her confusing position can be interpreted as 'promiscuous' from Butler's perspective of Antigone. Yuki, like Antigone, can be seen as the family's sole devoted and obedient sister who has a metaphorical incestuous relationship with her brothers.

As she talks about the pain experienced by the intellectually handicapped girl, Yuki comes to identify herself with the girl who was raped. Yuki's identification reveals her desire to be 'innocent' like 'the gods and Buddha' while nevertheless implying her self-contempt as *kegare*.

As if she was delirious with fever Yuki recalled when she first began to work as a prostitute, and announced to all in the *roji* how painful it was for an immature vagina to have a penis inserted like a sharp piece of wood and how such a lacerated vagina would become swollen and inflamed. In the process she felt that the idiot girl who left the baby and vanished away with the grandmother was her other self.⁵³⁸

Through speaking for the voiceless vanished girl Yuki attempts – indulges herself – to use her voice to denounce the male atrocity of the rape. In doing so, for the first time Yuki is able to verbalise and express her own experience of vaginal pain without the restrictions of the discourse of the eldest sister's duty towards the family. Interpreting the internationally acclaimed play by Eve Ensler (b. 1953), *The Vagina Monologues* (premiered 1996) I argue that Yuki's monologue can be regarded as a Burakumin woman's 'vagina monologue,' that is, a voice of resistance against male violence.

⁵³⁸ NKZ 6, p. 292.

The Vagina Monologues consists of a series of one-woman deliveries based on the playwright's interviews with over two hundred women from a range of backgrounds including American, Jewish, East Asian, Bosnian, and Afghan. Each of the monologues addresses a feature of the feminine experience related to subjects such as love, sex, menstruation, rape, masturbation, birth, orgasm, and gynaecological examination. Noting that women's experiences are like the vagina itself, largely 'invisible' in today's society, Ensler offers the *The Vagina Monologues* as a feminist playwright's attempt at representing the hidden voice of women speaking about their 'private parts.'⁵³⁹ The play includes a list of common names used around the world for the vagina and a list of the various representations of a woman's moans at orgasm. These are read aloud on the stage in an appeal for the liberation of women from sexual oppression. Translated into forty-eight languages, *The Vagina Monologues* has been produced in many cities and on college campuses around the world as a fundraiser to benefit antiviolence initiatives.⁵⁴⁰

The Vagina Monologues was largely received as an opportunity for women's voices to speak loudly, to be carefully heard, to be discussed and criticised, and to contribute to a worldwide movement of antiviolence and female empowerment. As she explains in her 2006 book, *Insecure at Last: Losing It in Our Security-Obsessed World*, although Ensler was born in a middle-class family and received a high quality education in the United States, she was a victim of her father's violence. While she was forced to sacrifice her 'emotional and psychological well-being,' Ensler's economically secure circumstances, her education, which was paid by her violent father, and the strong nation in which she was born, gave her the ability to write and act

⁵³⁹ Hammers 2006, p. 221.

⁵⁴⁰ Ensler is the founder of V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls that was inspired by *The Vagina Monologues*. By 2012, V-Day has raised more than ninety million dollars for grassroots groups around the world. See Flanders 2012, p. 11-17.

out the voices of women.⁵⁴¹ In representing women's voices, her strategy is to identify with those women and their vaginas.⁵⁴²

Ensler's work, however, has not been without its criticism. Her omission of history and the current U.S. intervention in Afghanistan from her poem 'Under the Burqa' (2003) has been interpreted as her complicity with the New Empire. Spivak's 1981 essay, 'French Feminism in an International Frame,' is useful when considering problems associated with Ensler's representation of the experiences of 'Third World' women. In this essay, Spivak criticises Julia Kristeva's essay, *About Chinese Women* (1977), as an 'obsessively self-centred' representation of the histories and lives of Chinese women because it is constituted in terms of the western female subject. In Spivak's view, western thinkers often invoke the Other of the West, as Ensler does the woman from Afghanistan, as a way to question their own identity and ideology.⁵⁴³ In other words, through invoking the question of the Other (Chinese women) in her analysis, Kristeva actually represents her concern about the theoretical oppression of women's corporeal experience in European culture. Although the language of *The Vagina Monologues* is intended to break 'the barriers between self and other, subject and object, West and East, liberated and oppressed,'⁵⁴⁴ the context of representation in the work paradoxically marks the writer/actor's subjectivity and hegemonic control over their represented targets. In this way, *The Vagina Monologues* can be seen as text which inevitably duplicates the imperialist attitudes of 19th century bourgeois women towards 'Third World' women.

⁵⁴¹ Ensler 2006, p. xvi.

⁵⁴² As Malini Johar Shueller notes, Ensler's work can be seen as exemplifying Hélène Cixous' declaration, 'Write your self. Your body must be heard.' See Shueller 2011, p. 18 and Cixous 1980, p. 250.

⁵⁴³ Spivak 1988, p. 137.

⁵⁴⁴ Shueller 2011, p. 17.

In spite of these shortcomings, in a world in which the voices of women's vaginas are all but completely erased, Ensler's representation of Afghan women and other women subject to sexual violence in war zones, found strong public acceptance. Yuki's speaking for the voiceless raped girl, however, is disregarded and disdained by both men and women in her community. By depicting the powerlessness of Yuki's voice, Nakagami demonstrates the impossibility of the voice of this gendered subject speaking to or being carefully heard by the mainstream. Nakagami's depiction of Yuki's unheard monologue about her identification with the 'idiot girl' articulates both the aging woman's hidden desire for self-identification as 'innocent' and the self-contempt that marks her interiority. This representation reveals the power of the concept of *kegare* which is internalised by the whole community, including Yuki (and also Satoko as discussed in the previous chapter), as a common sense idea that humiliates the sexually violated woman by dismissing her as polluted. For Yuki, however, the handicapped girl is 'innocent' because her disability prevents her from understanding or internalising the hegemonic concept of *kegare*.

Yuki's voice emerges from her sympathy for the molested girl. At the same time it conceals her desire to identify herself as innocent just like the girl. Yuki's attitude has a close parallel to that of the 'native informant' who speaks in a manner that supports power structures. In this way, she or he attempts to legitimate her or his standing in the mainstream. Yuki's attempt is never successful, however, because, like the 'idiot girl,' she too is foreclosed as a deviant stigmatised with *kegare* in the community. Drawing on Spivak's words, Yuki's 'resistance' to men through denouncing their rape of the sexually immature girls can be seen as a woman's act of 'resistance without [the necessary] infrastructure that would make us recognize

[the act as] resistance.’ It is, therefore, ‘in vain.’⁵⁴⁵ Nakagami’s depiction of the Burakumin eldest sister, Yuki, illustrates that a ‘vagina monologue’ from the marginalised ‘South’ is nothing like that from the ‘North’ which is valued as a ‘spellbinding, funny and almost unbearably moving’⁵⁴⁶ piece of art. On the contrary, it is a foreclosed ‘delirious’ utterance which can only faintly and momentarily be detected through a representation, such as that provided by Nakagami, of its impossibility to be heard.

The Voice of the Aged Mute Woman

I will here discuss a second example of a sexually stigmatised aging woman who appears in the last volume of the Akiyuki trilogy. This is the aged mute, Moyo no oba, who lost her power of speech after being raped as a young woman by *roji* men. As both a resident of the outcaste community and a rape victim she is a subject who experiences multiple layers of oppression both within and outside the community. Nakagami’s depiction of Moyo no oba’s disability yet again confirms Spivak’s view of the impossibility of ‘the sexed subaltern subject’ having a ‘space’ to make her voice audible.⁵⁴⁷

Moyo no oba was once a beautiful young woman who worked as a maid in the house of the wealthy man, Sakura. She became mute after being raped by the young gangsters Ryūzō, who was involved in Sakura’s lumbering business, and Yoshi, who was Ryūzō’s gambling friend. The rape was committed when these young men, on a rampage of terror, broke into the Sakura

⁵⁴⁵ Spivak 2006, p. 62.

⁵⁴⁶ This is an excerpt from the book review of *Variety* quoted in the back cover of *The Vagina Monologues*. See the back cover of Ensler 2001.

⁵⁴⁷ Spivak 1999, p. 307.

residence to rob and set fire to the place. Although Moyo no oba remembers the ‘wolf-like’ faces of these two men and also remembers Ryūzō’s voice saying ‘fuck her harder, harder’,⁵⁴⁸ as he urged Yoshi to be more violent, she never tells anyone who her attackers are. Sometime after this dreadful experience, she moves to the *roji* outcaste community with a little boy, Ryōichi. (Later, mother and son move to a neighbouring town.) Although Mon, the community sister, asks whether or not Ryōichi was her own son, Moyo no oba evades giving a clear answer. Most people in the *roji* community nevertheless assume that Ryōichi is the child to whom Moyo gave birth after the rape. Yoshi, one of the rapists, however, calls Ryōichi ‘the child of someone’s mistress’,⁵⁴⁹ insisting that the boy was abandoned by another party rather than being Moyo’s own child. In saying this, Yoshi thereby excludes Ryōichi from the genealogy of the *roji* men which the former fanatically believes to relate to the great genealogy of Genghis Khan.⁵⁵⁰ This demonstrates how traditional *roji* residents marginalise the immigrant from other areas, yet again confirming Nakagami’s perspective that ‘*hisabetsu sha* are also *sabetsu sha*.’

Through depicting the unconventional relationship and the absurd narrative exchange between this mother and son who can never openly identify themselves in that way, Nakagami represents the inner voice of the aged mute woman. The passage below demonstrates the relationship between Moyo no oba and Ryōichi.

Every night in her house in the *roji*, Moyo no oba would chant a sutra. Because she seldom left the house after chanting she would ask Ryōichi to tell about the things that happened outside. Although he wanted to confess that he stole some mandarins from the lolly shop [...], stole some coins from the money basket of the shop [...] and secretly went to the cafeteria to have curry rice, Ryōichi instead told Moyo no oba that a baby with two bodies was born in the house of Tagami beside the *roji* community well, and that a monster whose

⁵⁴⁸ NKZ 6, p. 129.

⁵⁴⁹ NKZ 6, p. 34.

⁵⁵⁰ NKZ 6, p. 277-278.

face has no eyes, no nose and no mouth appears each night in the house of the tinker nicknamed Pariki and begs for the eyes and nose of a normal human even if they are made of tin. These were all stories that Ryōichi made-up to hide what he actually did. In surprise, as if she sympathised with their pain, Moyo no oba made a sound from her throat without forming words, asking Ryoichi to tell her how the Siamese twins would stay and grow up in the *roji* [...].⁵⁵¹

Moya no oba is fascinated when she hears the stories made by Ryōichi to hide his petty crimes. Then, ‘as if she sympathised with their pain’ and by making a sound in her throat ‘that never becomes words,’ she eagerly asks Ryōichi to tell more about the deformed people of the *roji*.⁵⁵² Understanding Moyo no oba’s ‘voice,’ Ryōichi continues narrating his fiction. Regarding the fictional Siamese twins, Ryōichi tells Moyo no oba:

[...] the Siamese twins had an operation. Although they had two heads and two chests they were joined below stomach. After the *roji* elders came together and consulted, a difficult operation was carried out that made two humans who now have half a body each from the chest down.⁵⁵³

After hearing this tale, Moyo no oba becomes even less inclined to go out. Shutting herself away in her house, she ponders the difference between people who must remain inside and people who are able to walk freely about:

While the lame and deformed humans created by Ryōichi lived in the darkness of the *roji*, those who were able to walk about in the sun were always the people who, in spite of the fact that they had might have had certain factors inside, appeared on the surface to have no stigma. These seemingly unblemished people enjoyed making love and gambling, as if indulging themselves in the pleasure of being born human.⁵⁵⁴

Through the presentation of contradictory images such as disabled and ‘normal,’ light and darkness, and outside and inside, this passage expresses Moyo no oba’s recognition of the

⁵⁵¹ NKZ 6, p. 317.

⁵⁵² NKZ 6, p. 317.

⁵⁵³ NKZ 6, p. 318.

⁵⁵⁴ NKZ 6, p. 318.

binaries that exist within the outcaste community. Her understanding of the stigma lodged within people who assert their distractive desire, yet walk about freely, can be read as the raped woman's insight into the perverted desires of the rapists (Ryūzō and Yoshi) who traumatised her. I would assert that Moyo no oba's is the most agonised *mukoku* (silenced voice) consciousness inscribed in Nakagami's narratives.

Nakagami's representation of the aged mute's enthusiasm for the narratives of the *roji* recalls, in fact, the characterisation of Oryū no oba whose voice often narrated absurdities and supernatural stories. Given Ryōichi's external explanation of himself as an orphan who was in the care of Moyo no oba, their relationship might be seen as similar to that of Oryū no oba and the Nakamoto boys. Unlike Oryū no oba, however, Moyo no oba never herself becomes a community storyteller or great mother, that is, *omina*. In spite of this, fragments of her story are occasionally conveyed by her son. Moyo no oba's narration of her story is given in the scene in *Chi no hate* in which Ryōichi takes his childhood friend, Akiyuki, to the aged woman's house for the first time. Although Akiyuki knows nothing about his father's raid on the Sakura premises, Moyo no oba is horrified to see Akiyuki who resembles one of the 'wolf-face' men of her traumatic memory. In her desperation, she tells him, with Ryōichi mediating, that she lost her voice after being found and cursed by a long-nosed claw goblin (*karasu tengu*) of local legend. Ryōichi interprets the sounds that come from Moyo no oba's throat, sounds which, to Akiyuki, are just like the cry of a beast. The son also adds the explanation that 'after that happened, the oba felt scared of the *roji* and she moved to live here.'⁵⁵⁵

Moyo no oba's story, however, lacks any *omina* quality. This *oba*'s story of the vicious goblin is merely the product of her terror upon sighting Akiyuki's face and can never

⁵⁵⁵ NKZ 6, p. 122.

narrate anything to the community. The response of her son, however, has an *omina* quality. Ryōichi says to Akiyuki that ‘even though everyone knows about you from your birth you know nothing about us.’ In this way, he tries *omina*-like to narrate the memory of one aged *roji* woman in order to inform the ignorant young man, Akiyuki, about the cruel nature of community. In other words, Moyo no oba’s voice can only be represented as an *omina*’s voice through the son, Ryōichi, who has the ability to comprehend his mother’s voiceless voice. Ryōichi’s presence as a son is the most significant difference between Moyo no oba and Yuki who is also never an *omina*. While Yuki’s voice is simply ignored by people including her own family who dismiss her desire to convey her story as an *omina*, the ‘beast-like’ sounds that emerge from Moyo no oba’s throat are heard as words and interpreted into an audible voice by her secret son, Ryōichi, who assumes a role of an *omina*.

In his investigation of past atrocities committed by his father, Ryūzō, Akiyuki asks Ryōichi to take him once more to Moyo no oba. Although Ryōichi feels a strong brother-like (homosocial) bond with Akiyuki, the former firmly rejects the latter’s request which he knows is Akiyuki’s attempt to make Moyo no oba reveal her secret. As the pair visit Yoshi in the hospital ward in which the older man lies dying, Ryōichi says to Akiyuki:

[...] I will never let you see the mute Moyo no oba no matter how hard you push or threaten me. I have sealed that secret as a secret. Do you remember how I told you about the story of the half human? [...] I would make myself into that half human by hopping on one foot, closing one eye and using only one hand – I stole things from the lolly shop, followed the *roji*’s only priest, Reijo, making fun of him because of his funny way of walking and fought boys from the other places in the mountain – then I would tell these stories to Moyo no oba. She was always scared of Ryūzō and Yoshi. When they are dead, the half human will no longer be needed. There’ll be no need for me to lie any longer.⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁶ NKZ 6, p. 34.

In this passage we see Moyo no oba's terror and suffering; we also see her son's pain. Both his mother's silence and the insistence by Yoshi – possibly his father – that the young man was not a child of the woman (or himself, Yoshi) made Ryōichi humiliate himself as a 'half human.' At the same time, however, this narrative of a 'half human' saved him from the real story of a child born from an act that was so atrocious that he may have regretted being born at all. From this perspective, we can read Moyo no oba's silence about her secret – arising from the terror of the rape – and Ryōichi's acceptance of his mother's silence to keep this secret, in spite of the cost to himself, as signifying the ultimate exchange of love between a mother and her son.

Ryōichi's statement to Akiyuki given above can be interpreted as Nakagami's strategy for representing the silenced voice of the most oppressed subject of the 'South,' the aged mute woman. Although it is Ryōichi who declares that 'I have sealed that secret as a secret' the son does this on behalf of his mute mother with full knowledge of and understanding of the oppressive impact upon her of an act of extreme sexual violence. In other words, Nakagami provides an alternative representation of the silenced voice of the sexed woman. This strategy furthermore depicts the deep feeling between the old woman and the young man who have decided never to publically identify themselves as mother and son. This decision has dire consequences for Ryōichi also. For this son, supporting his mother in sealing the secret of his birth is to give up access to a genealogy by means of which he would create an identity for himself. In this sense, Ryōichi embodies the origin-less concept of nomadism. This is in stark contrast to his possible father, Yoshi, who is obsessed with a fictional *roji* genealogy that derives from Ghengis Khan. The relationship between the mute Moyo no oba and her secret son Ryōichi who responds so acutely to the former's silenced voice presents a new form of the kinship which is tied by deep love and also by consideration of their mutual subalternity. Through depicting

such a form of kinship, Nakagami demonstrates the possibility of being neither *hisabetsu sha* nor *sabetsu sha*, that is, being a person who never subscribes to the exclusionist practice of identification which rationalises discrimination against those who deviate from hegemonic convention. The narrative also demonstrates the high cost of taking such a stand.

In conclusion, drawing on Nakagami's view of *monogatari* as a tradition of narration by *omina*, and drawing also on Spivak's discussion of the 'foreclosed native informant,' we investigated the depiction of *oba*. This investigation began by reviewing the role of Oryū no oba in *Sen'nen no yuraku* and how this figure's paradoxical perspective thoroughly contested hegemonic principles such as hierarchical binaries and social identification.

We have also discussed two aged women, Yuki and Moyo, depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy. As the Burakumin *oba* who remains alive after the dismantlement of her community, Nakagami depicts Yuki's voice which, unlike *omina*'s voice, has no ability to narrate her view of the world. Nakagami's representation of Yuki's denunciation of the masculinist exploitation of female sexuality demonstrates Spivak's view of the subaltern woman's resistance which is inevitably in vain because she is 'foreclosed' by the hegemonic society and thereby lacks access to any necessary 'infrastructure' that would permit recognition of her resistance. Nakagami's inscription of the mute Moyo's voice is, on the other hand, realised through the relationship between a mother and son who mutually give up conventionally identifying themselves as mother and son but who nevertheless are bonded together by deep mutual love and understanding of their subalternity. Compassionate love for the oppressed and the wounded is a key essence of the *omina*'s voice which Nakagami inscribes in his representation of the voices of the three aged subaltern women.

Chapter Six

***Keibetsu*: Representing Woman as a Desiring Subject**

Nakagami's Last Narrative

Although the Akiyuki trilogy and *Sen'nen no yuraku* include a distinctive representation of the silenced subaltern woman, these works are, after all, primarily narratives of transgressive men. Even in *Hōsenka* (1980, *Touch-me-not*), a work that profiles Akiyuki's mother as the protagonist, women characters are principally depicted as objects or reflections of the male gaze. Ultimately, women in the majority of Nakagami's works are often little more than tactics to highlight the homosocial and patriarchal desire of powerful men. While *Sen'nen no yuraku* might portray the Burakumin *omina*, Oryū no oba, as a marginalised but therefore transcendent figure who becomes the great mother of the community, by the time of *Chi no hate*, with its effacement of the *roji* which is also the site of the *omina*'s narratives, Oryū no oba has died and her voice is no longer heard. The exception to this is *Kiseki* (1989, *The Miracle*), where the narratives of the *Sen'nen no yuraku omina* feature merely as the hallucination of an aged alcoholic man who is committed to a mental hospital after the effacement of the *roji*.

As evident in *Nichirin no tsubasa*, (1984, *Wings of the Sun*) and *Sanka* (1990, *Paean*), a key theme of Nakagami's narratives depicted from the mid-1980s until his 1992 death is the representation of the diaspora-like drift of the Burakumin whose homeland has been lost, in addition to people such as *yakuza* or sex workers who gather in various marginal spaces left behind or reproduced by the capitalist expansion and urbanisation that resulted from Japan's

‘bubble economy’ from around 1986 until 1991.⁵⁵⁷ Following this model, *Keibetsu* (1992, *Scorn*) depicts a young migrant woman sex worker as the protagonist.

Marketed as a ‘novel of romantic love,’⁵⁵⁸ *Keibetsu* (1992, *Scorn*), Nakagami’s last full-length novel, was serialised in the *Asahi Shinbun* between February and October, 1991, and published in book form in July 1992, just one month before the writer passed away at the age of forty-six. Over six-hundred pages in length, this is the only completed narrative among a number of novels – including *Izoku* (*A Different Clan*), *Wani no sei’iki* (*Sanctuary of the Crocodile*), *Neppū* (*Hot Wind*), and *Ran no sūkō* (*The Sublimity of the Orchid*) – that were written concurrently throughout the early 1990s until the decline in Nakagami’s health in early 1992. The reception of *Keibetsu* provoked controversy: many critics, such as Asada and Karatani, both of whom greatly respect Nakagami’s literary and critical prowess, see *Keibetsu* as a ‘failure.’⁵⁵⁹ Although highly readable because of its crisp, clear sentences and frequent depiction of dialogue, *Keibetsu* is often criticised as ‘obscure.’⁵⁶⁰ This, as Yomota notes, is because the novel is ‘isolated’ from Nakagami’s previous works, all of which have some association with either Kishū Kumano or the *roji*, that is, with the geopolitics of the ‘southern’ Burakumin context. All can be regarded as, in effect, belonging to Nakagami’s so-called Kishū saga.⁵⁶¹ *Keibetsu*, however, has no such direct association.

Keibetsu depicts the life experiences and consciousness of a young migrant woman in the early 1990s. This woman, a striptease dancer, Machiko, drifts between Tokyo, where she works as a sex worker, and her lover’s rural town, where she becomes the wife of an heir to a

⁵⁵⁷ Iwata 2005, p. 75.

⁵⁵⁸ NKZ 11, p. 424.

⁵⁵⁹ Karatani, Asada, Hasumi and Watanabe 1994, p. 40.

⁵⁶⁰ Yomota 1999, p. 497.

⁵⁶¹ Yomota 1999, p. 497.

wealthy family. While the Kishū saga, as noted, always depicts protagonists in relation to their Burakumin family and peripheral Kasuga community, *Keibetsu* provides limited information about the Tokyoite heroine. The author, in fact, never identifies Machiko's homeland, although her subalternity can be deduced from the fact that she works in Kabuki-chō. Referencing the statement made by Nakagami after the loss of his homeland that 'the *roji* is everywhere,' Hideo Levy explains that Kabuki-chō, Tokyo's largest and most notorious entertainment district, became for Nakagami one of many variations of the *roji*.⁵⁶² In addition to discussing the heroine's itinerancy between Tokyo and a rural town, my analysis will focus on the writer's depiction of contemporaneity in this work which strongly locates the novel in the social context of late 1980s and early 1990s Japan. The final chapter of the thesis will provide a new interpretation of *Keibetsu* by arguing for the novel as Nakagami's unique, if flawed, attempt to represent the woman as a desiring subject.

The *Keibetsu* Narrative

I will begin the discussion with a detailed synopsis of the novel's plot, which is divided into several distinct sections. The first part of *Keibetsu* depicts the activities of Machiko, the heroine who is presumably in her early twenties and who works as a dancer in a topless bar in the Kabuki-chō entertainment district. The narrative opens with a scene in which Machiko and her Filipino co-worker, Maria, stand on the street waiting to take a taxi to work.

[...] whenever they stood on the street these two women [Machiko and Maria] drew the penetrating gaze of those around them.

⁵⁶² See Levy's comment in an NHK documentary film entitled *Sakka Nakagami Kenji no sekai* (1996, *The World of the Writer, Nakagami Kenji*).

Both women and men regarded Machiko and Maria as if they were a different species of human.

Mistaking them as women who worked in a sauna house where the clients bathed with prostitutes or as women from a massage parlor, men always stared with the thought that because these were not normal women it was okay to size up their sexual qualities with curiously glittering eyes. Women, on the other hand, averted their eyes from the pair as if unable to view anything so impure or abject.

[Machiko thought,] although I turn my eyes away, their gazes pierce me like arrows. [What I really want is to] return their gazes with [the same] hostility, hatred and prejudice.⁵⁶³

Machiko's Filipino co-worker, Maria, is depicted as the heroine's only friend in the novel. Maria's marginality as a sexed woman from the South (here, the Philippines) further confirms, in Spivak's geopolitical sense, her own and also Machiko's peripheral social position. The scene above nevertheless depicts Machiko as a resilient woman who rebelliously 'gazes back' to the people who view and construct sex workers as sexual objects or 'immoral' women. Although she feels humiliated by being sexualised in this way on the street, the narrative makes clear that on the stage Machiko experiences a sense of pleasure at being the target of the gaze of her admirers and feels confident in her position as the most popular dancer in her workplace.

Machiko falls in love with one of her admirers, Kazu. In revenge against the manager of the topless bar with whom he engaged in illegal gambling, Kazu fabricates a police raid on the bar which also provides him with the chance to persuade Machiko to elope with him to his hometown.⁵⁶⁴ During their journey by car, Kazu lets Machiko know the real reason for his flight: although he has a huge debt with a number of gambling clubs in Kabuki-chō, his wealthy parents

⁵⁶³ NKZ 11, p. 29.

⁵⁶⁴ After completion of the serialisation of *Keibetsu*, Nakagami explained that he imagined Matsusaka in Mie Prefecture as Kazu's hometown. This statement possibly invokes Kazu's hometown as a place in Japan's peripheral 'South.' (For further detail, see Nakagami 1991.) My analysis, however, emphasises Nakagami's erasure of the *roji* context from the *Keibetsu* narrative as his attempt to depict a new narrative style which is distinct from his previous Kishū Kumano narratives.

and a gangster of their acquaintance who has been Kazu's older brother-like friend from childhood, have negotiated an agreement to release him from this debt. This was, however, on the condition that he returns to his homeland to become the family heir.

Soon after they arrive in his hometown, Kazu introduces Machiko to his family. While his parents are pleased at their son's return, they regard Machiko as immoral and reject her as their son's wife. The couple nevertheless starts a new life. Kazu reforms himself to work seriously in the family business, while Machiko lives as a housewife in a small apartment which Kazu rents. She also tries to join Kazu's peer group, the members of which all know about her past occupation. Known as the profligate son of the richest family in town, Kazu is always the centre of attention of both his peer group and the wider community. While hearing the rumours that circulate about Kazu's past and present, Machiko hides her strong hatred of the members of her husband's community who gaze at her as an outsider and a woman with an 'immoral' past.

An important element of the relationship between Machiko and Kazu is Machiko's desire for this to be conducted on a 'fifty-fifty' basis. Her principle of a 'fifty-fifty' relationship between a man and woman implies her will to be a desiring sexual subject without being treated as an object by men. Machiko reflects: 'In Kabuki-chō where all men and woman are open, if a man treated a dancer like a possession, she would immediately dump that lover and choose another.'⁵⁶⁵ In her lover's hometown, however, Machiko feels oppressed by the community that gazes at her as nothing but Kazu's possession, that is, as a sexual object.

⁵⁶⁵ NKZ 11, p. 220.

One day, Kazu uses violence against his parents who refuse to share their fortune with him because of Machiko. That night, Kazu forces Machiko to have violent sex. Despite feeling humiliated, she tries to be a ‘comfort’ for her momentarily demented lover.

Her stomach was grazed against the rough edge of the wooden counter as he grabbed her hair from behind. Even though there was only pain and humiliation in their intercourse, all Machiko could do was to wait for Kazu to finish thinking that her moans and agony might comfort his deranged feelings at having done something which should never be done in the world.⁵⁶⁶

As this rape-like intercourse occurs, Kazu’s friends are banging at a door. Immediately upon satisfying himself, Kazu lets his friends into the room. Hearing the men’s laughter, Machiko rushes to hide in the bathroom where she sees blood coming from her vagina.

Although humiliated Machiko believes in Kazu’s love, thinking that ‘there is no greater man than Kazu.’ She also realises that he has an ‘irresistible attraction’ for many people because of his ‘straightforward robustness’ and his ‘boyishness that stirs women’s emotions.’⁵⁶⁷ She further blames herself for causing trouble for Kazu because of her past as a sex worker. The morning after the clash with his parents, thinking that he will need a day off after excessive drinking, it is Machiko who calls Kazu’s boss to say that he will not be at work. That day, however, Machiko realises that her relationship with Kazu can never have a successful ‘fifty-fifty’ balance in his local community and she returns alone to Tokyo without telling anyone.

Becoming a topless dancer again, Machiko feels free from violence. Ten days later, however, Kazu, looking like ‘an orphan who is hungry for affection,’ finds Machiko and asks her

⁵⁶⁶ NKZ 11, p. 131-132.

⁵⁶⁷ NKZ 11, p. 135.

to return.⁵⁶⁸ Machiko and Kazu go back to the rural town with the brother-like gangster. Persuaded by the gangster, Kazu's parents give permission for their son's marriage to Machiko. Machiko, however, feels stressed about the marriage. She has a one-night stand with a stranger the day before her wedding. Some time after the wedding she is also intimate with a banker who is Kazu's friend. She further uses her sexual charms to seek assistance from a moneylender in order to repay a debt made by Kazu who once more becomes addicted to gambling around the time of Machiko's return to Tokyo. This growing debt forces Kazu into a corner and his parents tell him that they will help on the condition that he obtain a divorce from Machiko. Feeling trapped, Kazu severely self-harms. Refusing Machiko's request to commit double suicide, he orders his wife to leave. A few days after returning to Tokyo, Machiko is informed of Kazu's suicide. In her ex-husband's hometown, Machiko throws herself on Kazu's body repeatedly saying 'I love you.'⁵⁶⁹

In her 'anger' and 'scorn' (*keibetsu*)⁵⁷⁰ at Kazu's death, after the funeral Machiko invites the moneylender who provided money for Kazu's gambling to a rendezvous with the aim of avenging her dead husband. In a *chaya* (a restaurant used for a private meeting or secret dating), Machiko is restrained by the man as she tries to stab him. She does not resist the man's advances and they have sex.

Back in Tokyo, Machiko resumes her life as a topless dancer. In the final scene of *Keibetsu*, police suddenly raid the topless bar where Machiko is dancing naked. The following are the closing lines of the narrative:

⁵⁶⁸ NKZ 11, p. 165.

⁵⁶⁹ NKZ 11, p. 367.

⁵⁷⁰ NKZ 11, p. 361.

A man came walking towards Machiko out from between the people pushing and shoving one another.

Seeing the man's face, Machiko cried breathlessly, 'It's a lie,' as if this was the only word that she knew.⁵⁷¹

Machiko's statement 'It's a lie' (*uso*) does not clearly explain who appears in this scene. From a magical realism perspective, the man might even be Kazu, in spite of the fact that we know that he is dead. Although the narrative ends by implying a new encounter between Machiko and a man in the chaos of the raid, this is depicted in an enigmatic and ominous atmosphere.

The Heroine as a Source of 'Mystery'

According to Yomota and Watanabe, a particularly difficult-to-interpret aspect of the novel is Nakagami's characterisation of Machiko. Labelling her as 'mysterious,' these critics question why she becomes a topless dancer, why she insists on a 'fifty-fifty' relationship of equality with her lover, and why she sleeps with other men while at the same time desperately devoting herself to Kazu.⁵⁷² *Keibetsu* seldom assists our understanding of the Tokyoite heroine's motives or life choices (rather than lifestyle) by depicting her past. We are told, however, that she has had two traumatic life experiences. One is the loss of her virginity before the onset of her menarche while playing childish sex games with local boys. The other is the suicide of the brother to whom she was devoted. We are also told that Machiko is an orphan with two younger sisters, although we are never told the narrative of her parents' death. This lack of information regarding the protagonist's background is completely different from the Kishū saga and suggests

⁵⁷¹ NKZ 11, p. 405.

⁵⁷² See Yomota 1999 and Watanabe 1996b.

that *Keibetsu* is an ‘experimental’ work that demonstrates a ‘turning point’⁵⁷³ in Nakagami’s writing career.⁵⁷⁴

In spite of the relative lack of attention given to Machiko’s background, *Keibetsu* can be seen as a typical Nakagami narrative of women who are depicted in terms of being *ane/imōto* – the eldest sister of her siblings/younger sister of her eldest brother. Yomota, in fact, views Akiyuki’s eldest sister, Yoshiko, as Machiko’s archetype.⁵⁷⁵ In terms of Machiko’s role as a sex worker (*ane* as a working woman) we can add Satoko and Yuki to this archetype. Given Nakagami’s depiction of Machiko’s husband as a man who resembles her dead brother, we can further read the love romance depicted in *Keibetsu* as a variant of the erotic love previously discussed between a sister/wife (*imo*) and brother/husband (*se*). Although Machiko’s relationship with her brother is never the central theme, *Keibetsu* can nonetheless be seen as one of Nakagami’s many narratives depicting a woman whose role (either literally or metaphorically) is to play the incestuous sister to comfort the distressed brother (or brother-like lover) through her *imo no chikara*, power of women, characteristics.

Given that Japan undoubtedly qualifies as a patriarchal society,⁵⁷⁶ when considering Machiko’s so-called ‘mysterious’ behaviour and desire we might cite Simone de Beauvoir’s view of women as the ‘Other’ who causes ‘trouble’ in patriarchal societies. Expanding upon, while also critiquing, de Beauvoir’s ideas, Judith Butler opened new perspectives relating to desire and identity in her ground-breaking classic, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the*

⁵⁷³ Suga 1996b, p. 15.

⁵⁷⁴ Even though he may have been feeling unwell, without actually knowing that his cancer was progressing, Nakagami continued to innovate until the last. See Takayama, p. 387-391.

⁵⁷⁵ Yomota 1996, p. 271.

⁵⁷⁶ This is clear from Ueno Chizuko’s 1990 essay, *Kafuchō sei to shihon sei (Patriarchy and Capitalism)*. See Ueno 2012, p. 254-290.

Subversion of Identity. Here Butler questions Beauvoir's apparent assumption – developed in conjunction with Jean-Paul Sartre – that all desire related to women is 'trouble.' From such a perspective, woman is *only* an object of desire and therefore a source of 'mystery' and 'unknowability.'⁵⁷⁷ Butler explains how 'trouble' becomes 'scandal' when a woman unexpectedly demonstrates 'agency' by expressing her own desire:

For [the] masculine subject of desire, trouble became a scandal with the sudden intrusion, the unanticipated agency, of a female 'object' who inexplicably returns the glance, reverses the gaze, and contests the place and authority of the masculine position. The radical dependency of the masculine subject on the female 'Other' suddenly exposes his autonomy as illusory.⁵⁷⁸

Butler argues that the desiring female subject is 'trouble' only in the sense that she subverts and invalidates masculine autonomy, that is, the hegemonic gender norm. I see *Keibetsu* as demonstrating this effect: Machiko is a desiring female subject who creates 'trouble' by subverting the hegemonic gender norm. For the conservative masculine communal collective (which includes some women) depicted in the narrative, Machiko is an unknowable 'mystery.' Accordingly, her unconventional behaviour is seen as a 'scandal.'

I would argue that this scandalisation is, moreover, a characteristic of the many critiques of *Keibetsu* which read the novel as a mysterious and unrealistic narrative. This is especially evident in the interpretation given by some Japanese critics of the last scene of *Keibetsu* cited above. Yomota, for example, argues that the context depicted in that scene is one of the most inexplicable mysteries of the novel.⁵⁷⁹ Yomota asks:

⁵⁷⁷ Butler 1990, p. vii.

⁵⁷⁸ Butler 1990, p. vii.

⁵⁷⁹ Yomota 1996, p. 262.

[...], what is the ‘scorn’ of the title (of this novel)? Specifically, to whom and by whom is this scorn is directed? We never know the answers to these questions until we read the last chapter and we are therefore annoyingly suspended in air until then. Also, the closing scene is nothing more – to borrow a classic literary term – than a *Deus ex machina* which confuses or offends contemporary readers who are used to a realistic and logical story line.⁵⁸⁰

While we may or may not agree with Yomota’s assessment that the scene ‘confuses or offends’ readers, the closing scene is certainly open to multiple interpretations. The enigmatic man’s approach to Machiko can be read as a depiction of the cyclic repetition of events (that is, of Kazu’s approach to Machiko during a fabricated police raid depicted in an earlier part of *Keibetsu*). While acknowledging that this element of historical repetition-compulsion is one of the most important themes in Nakagami’s narratives, many critics appear unable to consider the scene in these terms. Instead, they replicate Yomota’s response and dismiss the scene as lacking realism or logic. Hiraoka Toshio, for example, cites the novel’s final scene to conclude that Machiko is an abstraction of ‘female power,’ that is, not a ‘realistic woman.’⁵⁸¹ In a reference to the well-known Japanese folktale of *hagoromo densetsu*, an *iruikon* tale of marriage between a human fisherman and non-human nymph, novelist Nakazawa Kei (b. 1959) suggests that Machiko is ‘a celestial nymph (*ten’nyo*) whose clothes were stolen twice.’⁵⁸² Yomota, too, draws a parallel to the *hagoromo* tradition and sees the heroine as both a legendary ‘image’ and an ‘illusion.’ Yomota further interprets *Keibetsu* as Nakagami’s variant of canonical narratives of romantic love such as *La Dame aux Caméllias* (1848) by Alexandre Dumas Fils (1824-1895).⁵⁸³ Yomota’s is probably the most influential critique of *Keibetsu* and is referenced by novelists

⁵⁸⁰ Yomota 1999, p. 497.

⁵⁸¹ Hiraoka 1991, p. 68.

⁵⁸² Nakazawa 1996, p. 208.

⁵⁸³ See Yomota 1999, p. 285.

such as Itō Seikō and Okuizumi Hikaru.⁵⁸⁴ For these critics, Machiko's puzzling behaviour, including her unrealistic encounter with an enigmatic man in the last scene, can only be understood as Nakagami's attempt at invoking intertextuality with traditional narratives about woman, such as the *imo no chikara* narrative, the *hagoromo* tradition, and *La Dame aux Caméllias*, to depict the sexuality of a contemporary woman.

Interestingly, feminist critic, Yamashita Etsuko, completely overlooks the closing scene in her interpretation of *Keibetsu*. To Yamashita, Machiko is 'the wife who is also the "mama" of a man who is *mazaa konpurekkusu*.'⁵⁸⁵ The term *mazaa konpurekkusu* (mother complex, *mazakon* for short) is a Japanese-English term with the popular meaning of 'mother's boy.' For Yamashita, *Keibetsu*, too, is merely a work written by 'a man who is *mazakon*.' In her essay entitled *Mazakon otoko ga bungaku shiteiru* (1994, *Mother's Boys Doing Literature*), Yamashita gives a feminist analysis of Nakagami as one of a number of Japanese *mazakon* writers, including Maruya Sai'ichi and Murakami Haruki. She notes 'the sense of aversion felt by contemporary woman readers' towards Nakagami's depiction of violence against women.⁵⁸⁶ Unlike Mizuta's 'gender critique,' which focuses on decoding the 'gender ideologies' that appear in texts, Yamashita's critique veers towards an essentialist articulation of a predetermined 'viewpoint' on the part of women readers.

As the above commentary demonstrates, many critics find the final scene of *Keibetsu* impossible to read as either logical or realistic, with Yamashita omitting reference to the scene altogether. What, however, is actually happening in the last scene of *Keibetsu* which many

⁵⁸⁴ Itō and Okuizumi 2012. Itō and Okuizumi's unpublished discourse entitled 'Bungei mandan' (Talk show on Literature) was presented at the Kumano University Summer Seminar in 2012.

⁵⁸⁵ Yamashita 1994, p. 178.

⁵⁸⁶ See Yamashita 1994, p. 150-182.

readers find it so difficult to make sense of? In the discussion that follows, I will consider this scene as one of actuality rather than one of allegorical myth or abstract imagery. I will further analyse this actuality as an example of the ‘contemporaneity’ depicted in this work which strongly locates the novel in the social context of late 1980s and early 1990s Japan. In this way, I will decode what I regard as the ‘mysteries’ of *Keibetsu*, namely, who is Machiko, this woman who is a desiring female subject, and what is the meaning of ‘scorn’ in this work?

A Daring Woman in *Tokyo Love Story*

In order to answer the questions posed above, I will firstly explore the significance of the desiring female subject through reference to the heroine of the 1991 television drama, *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* (*Tokyo Love Story*). One of the most successful TV dramas of 1990s Japan, this series depicted the ‘pure love’ (*jun'ai*) of a young working woman who lived in Tokyo at the peak of the bubble economy. The *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* protagonist is Rika, a young woman who is a *kikoku shijo* (returnee from overseas) from the United States. Like *Keibetsu*’s Machiko, Rika is seen by the conventional community as a ‘mystery’ who generates ‘scandal’ because her behaviour deviates from the hegemonic gender norm.

Rika is the subject of scandal in her workplace because in the past she had an affair with her boss who eventually abandoned his family for her. The relationship then broke down. Her co-workers regard her as ‘eccentric’ because, even after the couple separate, she continues to enjoy her work in the office managed by her ex-lover. Rika’s eccentricity was also seen in her ‘forward’ behaviour, exemplified by her saying to her current boyfriend, Kanji, ‘Let’s have

sex.⁵⁸⁷ In the early 1990s, this statement caused a huge sensation among viewers of the drama because it indicated that Rika directly communicated to the man she loved her desire ‘to see, to know, and to make love.’⁵⁸⁸ In her 1990 best-selling essay, *Ren’ai ron (Theory of Love)*, Saimon Fumi (b. 1957), the manga artist of *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* explains these three desires as the ‘basic desires of romance.’⁵⁸⁹

Nakagami, who was a keen viewer of *Tokyo rabu sutōrī*, discussed Rika’s character in a 1991 interview with Sakamoto Yūji, the playwright of this TV drama.

In this drama (*Tokyo rabu sutōrī*), there is a girl [Rika] who falls in love with a country boy [Kanji] who comes to Tokyo from Ehime. She wants to join his peer group but she can’t because she has no common memory of the community. I think that girls like Rika are increasing. She goes to visit (his homeland) because she wants to see his roots.⁵⁹⁰

For Nakagami, because Rika is a returnee, she is ‘a woman who has no homeland’ and ‘no close relationship with a community.’ Nakagami interprets Rika as a ‘sensitive and gentle woman who cares about her man very much.’ Even so, her efforts ‘never pay off’ and in the end Rika loses Kanji’s love to another woman.⁵⁹¹

The main narrative of *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* involves a love triangle between Rika, Kanji and Satomi, an old friend of Kanji. Satomi is a nursery school teacher and stereotypically characterised as a gentle, dependent, and obedient woman who appeals to men to ‘save’ or ‘protect’ her by projecting a sense of domesticity and fragility. As feminist psychologist, Ogura Chikako explains, Satomi is a woman who ‘presses the button’ of the desperate desire felt by many men to feel confident about their own ‘masculinity.’ Rika, on the other hand, deviates from

⁵⁸⁷ See *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* (1991, *Tokyo Love Story*), directed by Nagayama Kōzō and Hon’ma Ōhiko.

⁵⁸⁸ Saimon 1998, p. 21.

⁵⁸⁹ Saimon 1998, p. 21.

⁵⁹⁰ Nakagami and Sakamoto 2005, p. 433.

⁵⁹¹ Nakagami and Sakamoto 2005, p. 431-434.

the hegemonic gender stereotype of women in modern patriarchal society. This is because her ego does not fit within the norms that judge a woman's behaviour through the masculinist discourse of 'how a woman should be.'⁵⁹² Rika 'loses' her boyfriend's love to Satomi and eventually leaves Japan to work in America. Ogura interprets this as a demonstration of the 'tragedy' and 'loneliness' that a girl like Rika who deviates from conventional gender norms must experience in life.⁵⁹³ Notwithstanding her unrequited love and loneliness, Rika's 'daring' behaviour – her ability to act as an independent desiring subject – made a powerful impression on both men and women viewers of all ages. Through the office girl heroine who was a desiring female subject, *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* became a great hit and made a strong impact on viewers in Japan.

Ogura's interpretation of the masculinist discourse in *Tokyo rabu sutōrī* has a close parallel to Mizuta's gender critique of modern Japanese male writers' narratives that articulate the 'discourse of men' that operates in modern Japan. Given this perspective, Satomi can be seen as a girl who behaves according to the model of the man's 'dream woman.' As discussed in Chapter Two, the 'discourse of men' is a masculinist construction of the woman as a form of maternal sexuality about which the man dreams in his 'private' realm (interiority). The construction of this kind of 'dream woman' is necessary for the male to project his inner landscape and for the male writer to express this inner landscape in literature.

In terms of the plot and the characteristics of the heroine, *Keibetsu* and *Tokyo Rabu sutōrī* share many similarities. Both depict the expression of desire by a woman as a 'scandal.' The conventional communities in which both women reside can only regard their actions as

⁵⁹² Ogura 2002, p. 92-95.

⁵⁹³ Ogura 2002, p. 93-95.

deviating from the community norm. In answer to playwright Sakamoto's questions about *Keibetsu*, Nakagami explains Machiko as follows:

I have tried as far as possible not to use the idea of a love triangle [in *Keibetsu*]. Instead, I have taken a woman's perspective to create a heroine who, unlike Rika, tries to be straightforward. She works in a topless bar in Shinjuku's Kabuki-chō. Because she is daring she takes off all her underwear to be naked. [...] Since I am writing a romance about a woman who falls in love with a man and goes to the man's homeland for marriage, I interpret [my narrative] as a 'love story' more than anything else.⁵⁹⁴

This interview provides one of the few commentaries on Nakagami's thoughts about *Keibetsu*. In referring to Machiko as a topless Tokyo dancer, Nakagami (problematically) judges as 'daring' the fact that the heroine of *Keibetsu* 'takes off all her underwear to be naked.' This assessment, however, only relates to Machiko's unconventionality by deviating from the norm of patriarchal society through being a topless dancer. Given that it marks Nakagami's highly masculinist interpretation of Machiko, we can only regard such an assessment as questionable in that it is merely a variation of the patriarchal perspective of the 'male gaze' that regards (even if here seemingly admiringly) the topless dancer as an 'immoral' woman. By delivering a judgment that merely confirms Machiko's status as a 'sexual object,' Nakagami does not really acknowledge the *Keibetsu* protagonist as a truly 'daring' and actively desiring female subject. Before providing my reading of Machiko as a desiring subject, however, I will discuss the memoir of an American woman sex worker in order to provide insights into the self-determination of women in this industry.

The Daring Voices of Sex Workers

⁵⁹⁴ Nakagami and Sakamoto 2005, p. 434.

We have seen that the daring of a young woman who follows her own desire has the power to subvert mainstream patriarchal gender norms. This section will argue for the ‘subversive’ nature of a striptease dancer’s voice published in a collection of essays on sex work entitled *The Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry* (1987). Based on the work of the editors, Frédérique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander, I define sex workers as labourers who provide sexual services such as prostitution and striptease. Published in the United States in 1987 and translated into Japanese in 1993, *The Sex Work* is recognised as a landmark collection of the voices of the sex workers. Accordingly, the book generated discussion among sex workers, feminists and academics in the West and Japan. In terms of ‘contemporaneity,’ Nakagami’s *Keibetsu* can be seen as a text which speaks to the popular discourse regarding sex workers that circulated in the early 1990s.

One of the editors of *The Sex Work*, Priscilla Alexander, is a founding member of COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, circa 1973), an American prostitute rights organization. The goals of this group include the decriminalisation (as opposed to legislation imposed by male ‘ethical’ standards) of prostitution, pimping and pandering, as well as the elimination of social stigma concerning sex work as an occupation.⁵⁹⁵ In sympathy with the idea of COYOTE, *The Sex Work* project, too, rarely emphasises prostitution in terms of human sex trafficking, articulating rather the discriminatory, unfair and violent treatment of prostitutes by the police. This is because the prime aim of the project is to change social attitudes which see these women stigmatised as ‘immoral’ and often charged as ‘criminal’ by the authorities. For that purpose, *The Sex Work* frequently cites prostitutes’ voices which narrate a self-determination

⁵⁹⁵ See St. James and Alexander 2004.

to do sex work. Before identifying a problematic aspect of this approach, I will provide the following example of such a voice.

I resent being treated as a sex object on the street or at the office. But as an erotic dancer, this is my purpose. I perform to turn you on, and if I fail, I feel I've done a poor job. [...] In fact, to any enlightened observer, our very existence provides a distinction and a choice as to when a woman should be treated like a sex object and when she should not be. At the theater, yes; on the street, no. Having the distinction so obviously played out at work, I felt more personal power on the street. [...] For the first time I felt I could express my sexuality in a safe environment. I was in control. Understanding that it was perfectly okay for a women [SIC] to be a sex object in the appropriate context, and distinguishing what those contexts *were* [SIC] allowed me to get on with the business of learning and enjoying my craft.⁵⁹⁶

This memoir displays two important aspects which *The Sex Work* project tries to clearly highlight: the sex worker's self-determination as a professional stripper and her ability to disorder through her work the meaning of the patriarchal 'male gaze' which regards the woman as a 'sexual object.' At the theatre, although constructed as a sexual object by men, gazing back at clients to 'turn [them] on' as a skillful professional stripper is transaction that gives her pleasure. Regarding the discussions by sex workers in *The Sex Work*, Asano Chie notes that there are many women who relate how they recovered their self-esteem and the control of their own body through the self-disciplined practice of sex work.⁵⁹⁷ On the stage, these women are desiring subjects and this is the 'daring' of the sex worker. We can only speculate that Nakagami has this in mind when making his comment about Machiko.

As Suzuki Suzumi points out, in early 1990s Japan the voices of self-determination of American sex workers published in *The Sex Work* influenced many Japanese feminist activists, journalists, and sociologists, who then constructed a new discourse of (mainly woman)

⁵⁹⁶ Sundahl 1998, p. 176-177.

⁵⁹⁷ Asano 2007, p. 215.

prostitutes, *sekkusu wāku ron* (theory of sex work). Influenced by this theory, some researchers then enthusiastically sought to represent the voices of prostitutes who made the decision to commercialise their bodies through their self-determination (*jiko kettei*).⁵⁹⁸ Both Asano and Suzuki, however, noted flaws in this approach, arguing that some researchers pressured interviewee prostitutes to accept the concept of *jiko kettei* by asking leading questions about the women's motivation for entering sex work. In other words, some researchers who interviewed sex workers through the framework of *sekkusu wāku ron* sought arbitrarily to redefine all sex workers as independent, sexually-liberated women. In the process of producing a discourse of 'prostitution motivated by the worker's self-determination,' some sex workers were thus 'forced' to take responsibility for the difficulties they encountered in their work and in conventional society.⁵⁹⁹ In this context, women had little opportunity to express their fears or hesitation relating to their work. We will see, however, that in addition to noting her 'self-determined' desire to gaze back, Nakagami also enables Machiko to voice her fears related to her work.

Keibetsu does not clearly articulate Machiko's motive to become a topless dancer. Instead, as seen in the opening scene referenced earlier in this chapter, Machiko feels humiliated by being the object of people's voyeuristic or hostile gaze on the street. This recalls the words of the American stripper cited above. In terms of becoming a target of the male gaze on the stage, however, unlike the stripper's memoir which never gives any indication of the possibility of professional fear or hesitation, the *Keibetsu* narrative displays the dancer heroine's conflicting emotions of being determined while also experiencing bouts of helplessness. The following is a scene in which Machiko gives voice to these contradictory expressions while viewing her reflection in an anteroom mirror as she waits to go onto the stage.

⁵⁹⁸ Suzuki 2013, p. 56-67.

⁵⁹⁹ See Asano 1998 and Suzuki 2013.

One [expression] was the look she gave when feeling alone and dejected.

The other was the look that expressed her desire and her intention to seduce a man.

When she seemed to be helpless and alone, she provoked the beast-like male instinct that sought effortlessly to capture a weak and defence-less prey.

A frail-faced woman who danced on the mirrored counter could excite men to confidently overpower her as their sexual slave or object.

She closed her eyes not because men told her to. She voluntarily closed her eyes fearful of the confidence of these men.

Then, she smiled, realising that this fear was actually necessary for her to get through and to understand her real self.

Once Machiko was on stage being observed by men, the different expressions reflected here in the mirror became a sexual drama.

Looking into her own eyes, Machiko drew in her chin as if seducing herself.

Merely with this small gesture, her expression became that of a naked woman appealing [to her audience] with eyes that sparkled because warm blood flowed through veins that throbbed with her own desire [...] under the soft skin of her nipples, breasts, and hips.⁶⁰⁰

Machiko reflects on the fact that, at the split second that she comes out of the dressing-room to the stage, she is overcome by pain ‘as if being choked to death by some great power.’ As she dances before her admirers, however, she feels that their eager gaze warms her ‘deadly’ cold body so that her helpless expression transforms into that of a confident dancer.⁶⁰¹ In this context, too, Machiko has her so-called fifty-fifty relationship with these men. The men rescue her from her ‘deadly’ pain while she in turn ‘excite[s] the men to confidently overpower her as their sexual slave or object.’⁶⁰²

⁶⁰⁰ NKZ 11, p. 40-41.

⁶⁰¹ NKZ 11, p. 44.

⁶⁰² Although there is a clear comparison between Machiko and Rika, Machiko’s response here also recalls Satomi, Rika’s rival in *Tokyo rabu sutōrī*, who eventually wins Rika’s boyfriend’s love through ‘pressing a button’ of the

The true daring of the sex worker, Machiko, is found in her ability to disorder the meaning of the patriarchal ‘male gaze’ which regards the woman as a ‘sexual object.’ Although constructed in this way by men, she gazes back at them for her own pleasure. Machiko’s confidence evokes the American stripper who improved her self-esteem and the control of her own body through practicing striptease dancing as a professional. We can argue that for Machiko, too, the stage where she performed as a topless dancer was a place for recovery from the past. This included recovery from both her memory of her ‘crucial mistake as a woman,’ that is, breaking her hymen before menarche in children’s games with local boys, and the suicide of her brother who was ‘resolute and gentle’ with her mistake.⁶⁰³ On the stage, Machiko is a desiring subject. For her, the dance stage is a place in which she can control her own body and maintain her principle of a male-female fifty-fifty relationship.

A Woman Outsider in the Homosocial Community

Even though the serialisation of *Keibetsu* was not yet finished at the time of the conversation, Nakagami’s comments in his interview with Sakamoto previously cited are limited to those sections of the narrative that feature Machiko as a topless dancer in Tokyo. Three-fourths of the story, however, depict the heroine as a wife in her husband’s community where she must hide her inner voice and can no longer be a woman who, to cite Nakagami’s words used during the interview, ‘tries to be straightforward.’ Nakagami also states that he depicts a love triangle as little as possible. This, too, is only correct for the first quarter of the narrative until the

man’s desire to prove his ‘masculinity’ by helping a fragile woman. Although the nature of their desire has significant parallels, the nursery teacher, Satomi, is regarded by patriarchal gender norms as chaste while the topless dancer, Machiko, is stigmatised as immoral.

⁶⁰³ NKZ 11, p. 73.

point at which Machiko elopes from Tokyo with Kazu to his hometown. After the elopement the readers see the impact of various kinds of triangular relationships that involve the couple and other third parties, including Kazu's parents, acquaintances and ex-girlfriends.

Keibetsu depicts Machiko's struggle with Kazu's community which is the homosocial circle that excludes her. Although she tries to become a member of Kazu's peer group, after hearing the rumours of Kazu's past and present that circulate around her, Machiko feels isolated from the group and, ultimately, from the whole community. As in the Kishū saga, in *Keibetsu* Nakagami depicts endless rumours as the most important way of communication in the community and as a strategy to exclude outsiders. Along with the narrative of a woman who is foreclosed from the conventional community, *Keibetsu* contains the narrative of a man who ruins himself by being trapped in his homosocial circle. Although Kazu tries to reform himself for a new life with Machiko, his local peer group never leaves him alone in their desire for him to be their idol. Male friends encourage Kazu to become once again the leader of their circle while woman acquaintances overlook these men's illegal gambling in their desire for Kazu to remain his old boyish self. While seeming to welcome Machiko's arrival, these local men and women conceal the fact that they encourage Kazu to remain a permanent playboy without becoming a mature adult or reforming himself for the bride who to them is nothing but an outsider. Unlike Machiko, Kazu never becomes a desiring subject because he is destined to live as the object of the desire of the community that seeks to make him into an idol.

Hiding her frustration and isolation, Machiko endures Kazu's rape-like intercourse and subsequent thoughtless treatment. As previously noted, immediately after this assault, Kazu lets his peers who are banging at the door into the room while Machiko flees to the bathroom to

discover she is bleeding from her vagina. This scene demonstrates the violence of male homosociality and its power to marginalise and silence the woman with a slash inside herself in the private realm. This example of a woman's inability to voice her vaginal pain can be interpreted here through reference to the discussion in the previous chapter about Yuki, the eldest sister and former sex worker depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy. Machiko experiences an inability to voice her pain that locates her, too, in the genealogy of the 'sisters,' Burakumin or otherwise, who appear in Nakagami's narratives. Foreclosed by the mainstream, these 'sisters' nonetheless also internalise the hegemonic patriarchal mainstream view to end up despising themselves as 'immoral' deviants.

Although she feels humiliated, we have noted that Machiko continues to be attached to Kazu, blaming her own 'immoral' or 'polluted' background as the source of at least some of the problems she and Kazu are facing. As if to compensate for her guilt, Machiko tries to comfort Kazu through treating him like a 'fretful' child who needs her protection. The day after their rape-like sex, however, Machiko realises that her desire for a fifty-fifty relationship between an independent man and woman makes too many demands on Kazu, the spoilt child who can never grow up. She therefore secretly leaves for Tokyo. Instead of returning to her previous workplace in Kabuki-chō which is supervised by Kazu's gangster friend, however, she goes to Roppongi and finds work in a topless bar which is 'in the building next to *Bōeichō* [the Defense Agency of Japan].'⁶⁰⁴ This implies Machiko's desire to feel safe from, but at the same time to link with, the male homosociality that operates to humiliate women.

Even though feeling great distress at her separation from Kazu, once Machiko is back on stage she can again be a 'daring' woman who gazes back to her clients. She feels her own

⁶⁰⁴ NKZ 11, p. 147.

sensuality: ‘a sense deep inside her body as if she is making love with someone.’ On the stage, her desire for keeping a ‘fifty-fifty’ relationship with men is fulfilled by her creation of an ‘erotic dream’⁶⁰⁵ the intoxication of which is shared with her clients.

We are only gazing at each other. If you tried to touch me, [the dream] would immediately evaporate.

This is the same for we dancers, too. If we tried to touch men, we would be blocked by the wall between us.⁶⁰⁶

I previously noted the manner in which several critics have seen an intertextual link between *Keibetsu* and the *Hagoromo* legend. We can perhaps regard Kazu – the man – as breaking the taboo of *iruikon* marriage with the celestial nymph-like erotic dancer, Machiko. Machiko, however, flees back to her own self-fabricated ‘erotic dream.’ In this context, she feels constant guilt about Kazu’s problems such as his enormous gambling debt and the violence he displays towards his parents.

As noted in the synopsis, ten days after running away to Tokyo, Machiko is found by Kazu and the couple return to his rural hometown with Kazu’s older brother-like gangster friend. The gangster negotiates with Kazu’s parents who give permission for the pair to marry. Machiko feels stressed about Kazu and his family’s association with the *yakuza* which intrudes into her fifty-fifty relationship with the man she loves. This is a triangle between Machiko, Kazu and the violence that is founded on the homosocial device of driving the woman into a dead-end.

A Wife who Voluntarily Creates Homosocial Triangles

⁶⁰⁵ NKZ 11, p. 150-151.

⁶⁰⁶ NKZ 11, p. 151.

For Machiko, marriage to Kazu is a dead-end because she sees the system as a contradiction of her principle of a ‘fifty-fifty’ relationship between a man and woman. Eventually, Machiko decides that in order to assert her subjectivity, she must ‘take another lover to prove that she was just not one man’s possession even while knowing it was a betrayal of her priorities.’⁶⁰⁷ In Kabuki-chō, Machiko is a woman who feels independent of and equal to men through riskily committing herself to the dangerous field of sex work and by living close to the underworld with its connections to various kinds of criminal organisations. However, after eloping with her lover, she becomes a woman who is humiliatingly involved in a triangle involving the man who is her husband and his community. She contests the rural community by committing ‘adultery’ with Kazu’s old friend, that is, she voluntarily creates a new triangle in which it is she who holds power over both Kazu and the friend. This, however, ‘betrays her priorities’ because she must paradoxically depend on other men to prove that she is ‘not just one man’s possession.’

This male-male-female relationship can be considered as a homosocial triangle, as discussed in Chapter Four, between two rival men and a woman who is their common sexual object. Given the perspective of Machiko who actually creates the relationship in order to keep her fifty-fifty bond with Kazu, however, the sexed object in this triangle is *not* the woman but the paramour, that is, Kazu’s friend. In terms of Machiko’s desire to ‘prove’ that as a woman she is ‘not just one man’s possession,’ Kazu can also be seen an object that is exploited by Machiko in this affair. In other words, Machiko appropriates the device of male homosociality to express and realise her desire. While she cancels, or to borrow Spivak’s term ‘unlearns,’ her privileged and quality as the faithful wife of an heir of the wealthy family and demonstrates the ‘agency’ of her

⁶⁰⁷ NKZ 11, p. 220.

own desire, Machiko's 'adultery' nonetheless reveals her penchant for resorting to masculinist means to consolidate herself. In this context, belief in a male-female fifty-fifty relationship can be interpreted merely as a means of intensifying the power-based relationship in which a man and a woman endlessly struggle to gain ascendancy over each other.

Co-dependency between a Gambling Addict and the Woman who Loves Him Too Much

Why does Machiko fall for a man like Kazu who has a serious gambling addiction? Interestingly, many critics whose comments were noted earlier in this chapter do not remark on Kazu's gambling addiction or the violence he commits against his parents and Machiko. When she was a dancer in Kabuki-chō, Machiko had no knowledge of Kazu's background or his gambling problem. Even after knowing about Kazu's debt and the fact that he was a pimp for his ex-lover, Machiko merely tries to offer fifteen million yen of her own savings to repay this.⁶⁰⁸ Throughout the narrative, Machiko views Kazu as 'handsome' and 'manly.' Kazu's treatment of Machiko is arbitrary – he is sometimes rough and sexually orientated, but can also be caring and affectionate.

As a couple comprised of a gambling-addict womanizer and his devotee, Kazu and Machiko can be seen as a typical pair in a 'co-dependent' relationship. Co-dependency is a notion that was acknowledged in psychotherapy from the mid-1980s. While Anne Wilson Schaef's *Co-dependent: Misunderstood – Mistreated* (1986) discusses the notion from the viewpoint of a psychotherapist working in the field of addiction, Robin Norwood's bestselling 'self-help' book, *Women Who Love Too Much* (1985, the Japanese translation published in 1988)

⁶⁰⁸ NKZ 11, p. 86.

examines ‘addiction to amorous relationships.’ Most influential was Anthony Giddens’ *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (1992, the Japanese translation published in 1995), which gives insight into co-dependency from a sociological perspective. In Japan, the notion of co-dependency was mainly introduced by psychoanalyst Saitō Satoru, also the translator of a number of Schaefer’s publications, through his essays written on the topic of ‘adult children’ from the mid-1990s.

According to these writers,⁶⁰⁹ co-dependency is an example of ‘reverse reflexivity,’ a major symptom of which is addiction. The pathologic bases of reverse reflexivity are mainly low-esteem and self-denial in a manner similar to that displayed by drug or gambling addicts. Co-dependency can therefore be explained as ‘relationship addiction,’ which usually manifests as an excessive attachment to a particular individual or community. The most significant behaviour of a co-dependent person is being overly devoted and self-sacrificing. Because of his/her low self-esteem, the person involved needs to have their ‘reason for being’ evaluated by another person or persons. A typical case of co-dependency can be seen in the relationship between an alcoholic husband and his devoted wife. Because the wife is excessively preoccupied with caring for the alcoholic partner, he comes to think that he cannot survive without her. For the wife, being needed by her husband proves the value of her being. By acting in this way, however, the wife is unconsciously supporting the husband’s addiction and encouraging the husband’s desire to drink. Thus, a co-dependent wife lives with her husband’s desire as her own desire.⁶¹⁰ Giddens notes that co-dependence – although by no means limited to women – is a term that in some ways explains what was once called the ‘feminine role’ in general.⁶¹¹ Saitō

⁶⁰⁹ See Schaefer 1992, Norwood 2004, Giddens 1992 and Saitō 1996.

⁶¹⁰ See Schaefer 1992, Norwood 2004, Giddens 1992 and Saitō 1996.

⁶¹¹ Giddens 1992, p. 87.

also argues that traditional Japanese society regarded the co-dependent ‘devoted woman’ as ‘the flower of womanhood.’ There was almost no perspective from which to see these women as ‘morbid’ until the mid 1990s.⁶¹²

Paradoxical though it may seem, Machiko’s flirtation with men outside her marriage invokes Giddens’ explanation: ‘A co-dependent person is someone who, in order to sustain a sense of ontological security, requires another individual or set of individuals, to define her (or his) wants.’⁶¹³ While it appears that Machiko’s attempt to maintain a ‘fifty-fifty relationship between a man and woman’ is an expression of her own desire, her true desire, in fact, is to have her value approved by someone else. When Kazu ‘abandons’ her for his patriarchal family or male homosocial circle, she must affirm her value as a person by entering into relationships with other men.

The nature of Machiko’s behaviour suggests an ‘addiction to an amorous relationship.’ Co-dependency is related to control and power although not always necessarily in the context of sex. Addiction to amorous relationships, on the other hand, is a condition manifested as the need to have sexual intercourse to distract the intolerable loneliness and boredom of being alone. In her book, Norwood refers to women who are addicted to such amorous relationship as ‘women who love too much.’ She notes that these women tend to have sexual relationships with other men (or women) who have some sort of addiction problem and who lack the strength to independently face and deal with feelings of loneliness and boredom.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² Saitō 2008, p. 54-55.

⁶¹³ Giddens 1992, p. 89.

⁶¹⁴ See Norwood 2004.

Saitō explains the characteristics of the type of man who attracts these ‘women who love too much.’

More often than not, he is conceited but not good at being a member of society. He is a male chauvinist who excessively emphasises his masculinity. Although he appears confident and reliable to his lover, he also shows her his tenderness, nestling up to her like a lonely child to its mother. She is attracted to these child-like qualities. Although he is actually self-centred and cold-hearted, his lover cannot leave him because she gradually becomes addicted to feeling his dependency.⁶¹⁵

This explanation can apply to the case of Machiko and Kazu. The power game between this co-dependent couple leads to their tragic separation. When Machiko suggests that the couple commit double suicide, Kazu refuses and orders his wife to leave his community. A few days after Machiko arrives in Tokyo, Kazu commits suicide alone. Kazu’s ‘manliness’ saves Machiko’s life but takes away his own.

‘Women who love too much’ feel intolerable mental and emotional pain when they separate from their co-dependent partner. Most return to their old partners or desperately seek a new partner. As Saitō’s notes, such women almost inevitably seek out men with problems to match their own pathologies even though, to quote Saito, they are ‘in different corners of the party hall.’⁶¹⁶ We might argue that this is literally what occurs in the so-called ‘mysterious’ last scene of *Keibetsu*, where we read that ‘a man came walking towards Machiko out from between the people pushing and shoving one another.’ Here, both the chaos caused by the police raid and Machiko’s encounter with a man, is a repetition of what occurs in the earlier part of the narrative when Machiko meets Kazu. From the perspective of Machiko as a ‘woman who loves too much,’ the ‘man’ who appears at the end of the narrative is possibly another man like Kazu who cannot

⁶¹⁵ Saitō 2008, p. 56.

⁶¹⁶ Saitō 2008, p. 56.

survive without his co-dependent lover. It is, in fact, highly likely that Machiko will compulsively repeat her experience with Kazu by entering once more into a relationship with, to use Saitō's words, a man who is 'conceited but not good at being a member of society,' in addition to being 'self-centred and cold-hearted.'

A Woman who 'Scorns' a Dead Man

This section investigates the biggest mystery of the novel, namely, the meaning of the title, scorn, *keibetsu*, and, recalling Yomota, 'to whom and by whom this scorn is directed.' This section investigates the biggest mystery of the novel, namely, the meaning of the title, scorn, *keibetsu*, and, recalling Yomota, 'to whom and by whom this scorn is directed.' Since throughout the narrative there is only one scene in which Machiko's sense of scorn is depicted, it is to this scene that we must turn for insights into this issue.

How dare the man that I love so dearly die leaving me behind with my nipples painfully congested with red blood in spite of my determination for us to be a man and a woman who are equal.

Trapped by an anger from which there was no escape, Machiko felt in the pain of her nipples brushing against her blouse the sense of woman's scorn towards the man with whom she no longer had a fifty-fifty relationship.⁶¹⁷

Although Machiko's feeling of scorn is caused by Kazu's death, we can read this scorn as directed not just at Kazu but in general at men who are not able to keep a fifty-fifty relationship with women. As we have seen in the previous section, a co-dependent woman who is addicted to relationships with men is characterised by her repeated encounters with and separation from her

⁶¹⁷ NKZ 11, p. 361.

lovers. Machiko had already experienced the death of a man whom she loved. This was her brother who committed suicide and whom she thought ‘look[ed] like Kazu.’⁶¹⁸

I will here examine how the death of Machiko’s brother accounts for her co-dependency through appropriating Giddens’ view of the father/daughter relationship. Although highly influential in the 1990s, Giddens’ view was controversial because it was mainly based on Freud’s concept of ‘penis envy.’ Giddens’ perspective nonetheless encompasses various aspects of 1990s feminist thought in terms of profiling the woman as a desiring subject, a position that resonates with the female self that is depicted in *Keibetsu*. I draw on Giddens’ material here not necessarily because I support his ideas but to demonstrate the contemporaneity which is evident in Nakagami’s depiction of the male-female relationship that accorded with the notion of co-dependency current at that time. Words in double inverted commas below are cited from Giddens’ essay. Single inverted commas indicate Nakagami’s words.

Machiko was a girl who was ‘active and manly.’⁶¹⁹ The childhood experience of breaking her hymen while engaged in sexual play with local boys gave her a shock and forced her to acknowledge the power of the phallus. It also gave her “a sense of frustration” for “her wish” to be like a boy i.e. “to be like the father.” Machiko’s brother who was ‘resolute and gentle’ with her ‘crucial mistake as a woman’⁶²⁰ (virginal sex before the menarche) is, for her, a father who “symbolises separation and ‘acting on’ the world; yet he is also unattainable.” Because her

⁶¹⁸ NKZ 11, p. 73.

⁶¹⁹ NKZ 11, p. 73.

⁶²⁰ NKZ 11, p. 73.

ideal man, her brother, also failed in life, Machiko's "despair at men, alternating with an idealising of them" became blurred in her mind.⁶²¹

In Machiko's case, the sense that gripped her when she heard of Kazu's suicide was not despair but resentment and scorn. Her resentment is directed against the man who suddenly kills himself and therefore destroys her ideal. Losing Kazu who looks like her brother is, for Machiko, an unexpected repetition of separation from a man whom she loved. The pain of her congested nipples is an antonym of the man who is cold and dead. Yet perhaps Machiko's scorn is both for the man who lost the dynamism of the power of life and sex, *and* also for herself. Her view of herself as 'a woman who is no longer in a fifty-fifty relationship' with the dead man can be read as her self-mockery at the fact that she remains alone in the male-female power game where triumph signifies perhaps being complicit in her partner's death.

Machiko's anger at Kazu's death turns into 'sorrow' when she is restrained by the moneylender whom she attacks with a knife. For her, the moneylender was a man who looked like Kazu, who in turn looked like her brother. In a private room of the *chaya* restaurant, Machiko does not resist when this man 'inserts his tongue into her lips.' Her failure to resist this embrace arises from her interpreting his 'reckless' behaviour towards her as 'the sign of a living man.'⁶²² The scene demonstrates her desire for the dynamism of *sei* – a homonym of life and sex. Although we can read the encounter as Machiko's co-dependent way of relating to men, I would rather read it as a representation of a recovering woman who draws on the power of a living man in her dynamic desire for both sex and life.

⁶²¹ Giddens 1992, p. 113-114.

⁶²² NKZ 11, p. 390.

My view of Machiko's scorn delineated above is influenced also by my reading of Nakagami's 'scorn' for modern literature, which the writer regards as having lost the energy and enthusiasm necessary to make new narratives happen. In the 1978 'Monogatari no teikei' lecture, Nakagami used the term 'scorn' to refer particularly to the narratives of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. According to Nakagami, Tanizaki's narratives were characterised by a 'fundamental powerlessness' (literally *soko kara no chikara no nasa* – powerless from the bottom), marked by their submissiveness to the 'archetypical narrative tradition.' As discussed in a previous chapter, while he greatly respected Tanizaki as one of only a few writers who was aware of narrative as code, Nakagami criticised that writer's literature for the lack of dynamism that resulted from Tanizaki's failure to 'free' himself from the social norms which are represented through the hegemonic archetype of narrative. Nakagami considers that his own responsibility as a novelist is to reveal the 'archetype of narrative' and to destroy the 'laws and codes' which justify mainstream discrimination against difference and otherness. For Nakagami, this amounts ultimately to an attempt to 'make new literature.'⁶²³

In *Keibetsu*, Nakagami tried, although not necessarily successfully, to draw on the narrative code of women. He was unable, however, to destroy the mainstream code in a way that was necessary to give prominence to woman's narrative code. While it is possible for Machiko to subvert the mainstream gender code as a solitary sex worker, she meanwhile is trapped within this code as a wife who is 'co-dependent' on men. In order to live her own desire as a sex worker, Machiko must endure living in close proximity to the metropolis underworld inhabited by violent males. If she lives as a wife, she must expose herself to the scorn of the conventional community.

⁶²³ See NKZ 15, p. 140-156 and Nakagami 1999a, p. 224-239.

Keibetsu demonstrates the ordeal of the woman who wishes (impossibly) to voice herself in a masculinist society.

Through comparison with a television drama, the self-writing of a sex worker, 'self-help' books, a theory of homosociality, and psychological and sociological studies into women's desire current during the late 1980s and early 1990s, I have also demonstrated how *Keibetsu* inscribes contemporaneity with the social context of the time. This was a time in which the desiring female subject, once silenced and dismissed, was finally given a profile. When considered from this perspective, in spite of its flaws, *Keibetsu* can be read as a novel in praise of the dynamism of a woman's self.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how Nakagami writes the voices of the *mukoku* – the voiceless – in his narratives. Given that an important objective of Nakagami's writing was to depict the oppressed lives of the Burakumin in his homeland of Kishū Kumano, I began my discussion by presenting Nakagami's geopolitical perspective of Kumano as Japan's peripheral 'South.' As read in Derrida's comment, Nakagami is a writer who critiques peripherality as an ideology that rationalises geopolitical binarism, namely the domination of the peripheral 'South' by the hegemonic centre of the 'North.' Drawing on Gramsci's study of subaltern class in Southern Italy and Marx's view of ideology as '[the] ideas of the ruling class,' I articulated how the ideas of these thinkers (and re-interpreted by later scholars such as Spivak, Said and Karatani) destabilise mainstream representation of society's binary opposites and open the possibility of collapsing those binaries in a manner that forces a recognition of the legitimacy of difference. It is this difference that Nakagami sought to bring to the fore in his narratives.

Seeking to profile several texts not widely discussed in Nakagami scholarship, I discussed *Keibetsu*, Nakagami's last work which, like the 1976 short story, 'Rakudo,' has rarely been analysed either inside or outside Japan. I also chose this work to highlight Nakagami's attempt to depict the young woman protagonist in *Keibetsu* as a desiring subject. This attempt is almost completely absent from Nakagami scholarship and I felt compelled to address this. Nevertheless, the thesis also included discussion of the Akiyuki trilogy and *Sen'nen no yuraku*, the writer's most widely circulated and discussed narratives of transgressive outcaste men. I revisited these works to provide a new interpretation, particularly of the Akiyuki trilogy. Rather

than shining the primary spotlight as much existing scholarship does on the writer's male characters, I read Nakagami's texts with a focus on the writer's representation of the voices of silenced women.

The key theoretical 'anchor' of the thesis was Spivak's theory of representing the subaltern and it was this thinker's theory of the subaltern that created the possibility for me to hear the voices of the women in Nakagami's work. I appropriated Spivak's idea of the subaltern, derived from Gramsci, which, I argued, can be used to understand Nakagami's ideas on how the oppressed Burakumin have been marginalised by mainstream Japanese discourses. I argued that Spivak's ideas on geopolitics and the role of the intellectual, also derived from Gramsci, have a close parallel to Nakagami's geopolitical perspective and ambivalence about his role as an outcaste community member who simultaneously held the privilege of a writer. Nevertheless, it was Spivak's discussion of the subaltern that contributed most to my discussion. In her essays 'Can the subaltern speak?' and *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, Spivak argues that the multiple workings of hegemonic ideologies such as colonialism, imperialism and patriarchy prevent the subaltern from speaking to or being heard by mainstream society. Spivak warns, furthermore, that the discourse of 'the intellectual' or even the 'indigenous' representative – in other words, the 'native informant' – can possibly close out, or 'foreclose' to use her word, marginalised people of whom the poorest woman from the 'South' is the ultimate exemplar. These women can never assume the role of political representative for their communities because of multiple reasons such as gender (being a woman), age (not being young) and illiteracy (not being able to access the written word). Even when an intellectual believes they may have presented the voice of the subaltern, her true voice is often muted by the hegemonic ideas upon which the intellectual draws. I articulated this mechanism as 'the paradox of representing the

silenced voice.’ While much of Chapter One covered the issues discussed above, I also included in this section of the thesis an example of Nakagami’s insight into the duty of the ‘person who has [power of] language.’ This discussion focussed on an excerpt from the writer’s nonfiction travel journal, *Kishū*, in which Nakagami relates a meeting with Burakumin fishermen. This meeting is followed up with a private conversation with a local fisherman’s wife. During the meeting, Nakagami became aware of the trinomial hierarchy between himself as a writer who has a power of language, the local Burakumin representatives who presented the ‘legitimate’ community position that there was no discrimination against Burakumin fisherman, and the voiceless people who were either absent from the meeting or whose voices were closed out. One of these was a Burakumin fisherman’s wife. Through ‘unlearning’ his privilege Nakagami was able to have an informal conversation with this woman who ambiguously narrated the unfair differences in port-use charges between traditional and newcomer Burakumin fishermen. Through writing these experiences, Nakagami became aware of difference as structural discrimination generated by the various power relationships that exist between the community and the outside, but also among members of the community.

Chapter Two focused on Nakagami’s short story ‘Rakudo.’ Here I analysed the violent young husband protagonist as an ‘impotent patriarch’ (*fugainai kachō*). This is a motif that frequently appears in the I-novel and, given that, as biographer Takayama notes, the violent actions of the protagonist are often regarded as modelled to some extent on the actions of Nakagami himself, I argued that ‘Rakudo’ was a work that was influenced by that genre. In addition to examining ‘Rakudo’ as Nakagami’s representation of the voice of a violent young patriarch, I also profiled the silence of the wife that was evident in this work. Drawing on Mizuta’s gender critique, I theorised the patriarch’s violence against his wife as a typical modern

Japanese literary representation of the ‘discourse of men.’ This is the masculinist construction of woman as possessing a maternal sexuality about which the male fantasises in his ‘private’ realm or interiority. Borrowing Spivak’s view of the Hindu practice of *sati*, I presented the protagonist’s tyrannical dream of self-immolation with his family as this impotent patriarch’s desire for eternal family unity, a desire based on his penchant for the patriarchal dogma of female self-sacrifice.

‘Rakudo’ also depicts the wife’s definitive refusal of her husband’s desire for her to be the ‘mother.’ Distraught when his wife appears as the Other, the husband commits severe violence against the woman who refuses to conform to his fantasy. Her leaving home with the couple’s two young daughters demonstrates the ultimate loss and emptiness of the man’s inner landscape. While the husband’s interiority is revealed through the violent act, the wife conceals her inner self, even in the letter she sends to her husband after the couple’s separation. I articulated the wife’s silence as her (un)voiced rejection of and defiance against male violence and patriarchal discourse.

ChapterThree focused on the Akiyuki trilogy to analyse Nakagami’s depiction of the voice of a transgressive young man, Akiyuki, and his subaltern family and community located in a Kumano *roji*. While I reviewed ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada*, the first two narratives of the trilogy, this was principally to provide a foundation for my reading of the final work in the series, *Chi no hate, shijō no toki*. The focus of my analysis of ‘Misaki’ and *Kareki nada* was the violation of taboos including Akiyuki’s commission of incest with his half-sister and his murder of his half-brother. I noted how these acts could be read as the son’s patricidal challenge against the father. I further articulated how the father and son’s rivalrous relationship was marked by characteristics

that were both Oedipal and homosexual. Drawing on the theory of *monogatari* by Hasumi and also on Nakagami's own ideas about this form of written expression, I discussed how Akiyuki's transgressive acts were generated by the powerful law of narrative that invokes the cyclic repetition of tragic events and endless community member's rumours related to the matrilineal family.

Unlike the first two volumes of the trilogy, *Chi no hate* unambiguously depicts both Akiyuki's background and the *roji* community as associated with the outcaste context through inscribing the text with derogatory Burakumin terms such as *eta* and *yotsu*. These are terms related to the concept of *kegare* (impurity), which has justified discrimination against the Burakumin through various eras. *Chi no hate* stands apart from 'Misaki' and *Kareki nada* because it was written *after* Nakagami's identification of himself as a novelist who chose to 'become a Burakumin.' With this in mind, I analysed *Chi no hate* as Nakagami's representation of the voice of the Burakumin. Foregrounding Nakagami's claim that *hisabetsu sha* (people who are discriminated against) are also *sabetsu sha* (people who themselves discriminate). I argued that this claim was an expression of the writer's desire to become nothing, that is, to become neither *hisabetsu sha* nor *sabetsu sha*. I articulated Nakagami's declaration of 'becoming a Burakumin' as part of his project to give expression to the oppressed Burakumin voice.

Focusing on the historical and cultural context of the sister (*imōto*) and its literary representation, Chapter Four analysed Nakagami's depiction of Akiyuki's incestuous half-sister, Satoko. I articulated Satoko as an exemplar of Spivak's 'sexed subaltern subject' who has 'no space' to speak in modern patriarchal society. Also borrowing Sedgwick's view of homosociality, the couple's incest was read as the brother's justification of exploiting his half-sister's sexuality

for an Oedipal challenge which conceals the young man's 'homosocial' desire to consolidate his bond with the father.

Chapter Four also investigated how Nakagami made use of *Kyōdai shinjū*, a ballad from the Kasuga Burakumin district, in his narration of the act of incest committed by Akiyuki and Satoko, or rather by Akiyuki against Satoko. Nakagami understood *Kyōdai shinjū* as a narrative brought to his hometown by Burakumin women who worked as migrant factory girls in silk industrial areas during the modern era. The writer reads the ballad as the hidden voice of these women and also as an account of the oppressive social penalties imposed by community upon deviance. Through referring to Yanagita's study of *imo no chikara* (the power of woman), I interpreted the sister (*imōto*) represented in the ballad as the gendered subject silenced by modern patriarchal ideologies. My reading presented *Kyōdai shinjū* as the narrative of a sister's unspeakable love for her brother and her death-bent defiance against the masculinist kinship/state law. Drawing on Judith Butler's analysis of Sophocles' *Antigone*, I argued that *Kyōdai shinjū* narrates the archetypical representation of the death of the sister as a form of marriage to her brother and also the penalty demanded by the hegemonic law for those who transgress.

Through inscribing the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative into the Akiyuki trilogy, Nakagami depicts Satoko's silenced voice to both territorialise her brother and defy her father as an embodiment of patriarchal social authority. Her father and brother's misogynist view of Satoko as 'useless' clearly demonstrates her subalternity in the male homosocial bond. Satoko's extreme devotion to the water cult, I argued, was the subaltern sister's attempt, like that of Antigone, to gain a voice through assuming the support of a divine law which is superior to the masculine law of human society. Although she appropriates the cult's 'religious' precepts as 'infrastructure' to

voice herself, Satoko nonetheless reveals both her contempt of herself as *kegare* and her strong desire to be pure. While despising the masculinist law as *kegare*, she conspires with that law to humiliate those who are socially discriminated against as *kegare*. Through depicting the paradox of Satoko, Nakagami demonstrates his view that *hisabetsu sha* are also *sabetsu sha*. For Satoko, Akiyuki's departure from the *roji* was his sign for her to break her attachment to the *Kyōdai shinjū* narrative which fed her fear of death as the consequence of incestuous love. This suggests that the sexed sister's silenced voice was finally heard by her beloved brother who in turn felt strong affection (*itoshisa*) for her.

Chapter Five discussed Nakagami's representation of the old women or *oba* from the Kumano Burakumin community. Nakagami's view of the *oba*'s voice was examined through reading his essay on *monogatari* as a tradition of narrating by the *omina*, the old woman with the power to tell stories of and for the community. Drawing on Nakagami's view of *omina* and also on Spivak's discussion of the '(foreclosed) native informant,' I investigated the voice of the *roji omina*, Oryū no oba, the acclaimed elderly woman featured in *Sen'nen no yuraku*. Nakagami depicts Oryū no oba's voice (or consciousness) as the source of the narration of the religious precepts that underpinned oral communal folklore and historical memories of the oppressed. The absurdity, amorality and paradox heard in Oryū no oba's voice consistently contested hegemonic principles, including the hierarchical binaries that lead to discrimination against Burakumin. Depicting these elements in the *omina*'s voice is one element of Nakagami's narrative strategy to invalidate hegemonic mainstream thought that refuses the legitimacy of difference.

The chapter also discussed the voices of Yuki and Moyo, two aged outcaste women depicted in the Akiyuki trilogy. Unlike the *omina*, after the obliteration of the *roji* these aged

women had no space from which to narrate their view of the world. Drawing on Spivak, I read Yuki's monologue about the immature mentally handicapped girl's wounded vagina as a representation of the 'native' voice that, in fact, entrenches the power of hegemonic society. Yet, Yuki's voice is completely disregarded by the mainstream. This obliteration of the aged *oba*'s voice confirms Spivak's view that, since the subaltern woman lacks access to the masculinist 'infrastructure' that would authorise her voice, her resistance is inevitably in vain.

Moyo no oba, who became mute young after being raped by the *roji* men, was examined as Nakagami's representation of the voice of the most oppressed woman from the subaltern 'South.' Her speaking disability marks Spivak's claim of the impossibility of 'the sexed subaltern subject' having a 'space' to speak. I nevertheless theorised agency in her silence, which, I argued, expressed her 'voice,' or her desire, to protect her child from the agonising reality of his origin as a child of rape. Perceiving his mother's position, the son assumes an *omina* role to interpret his mother's 'beast-like' voice in order to inform the ignorant young man, Akiyuki, about the cruel nature of community which, unable to 'hear' Moyo's silence, seeks to force her to speak. Through depicting the unconventional kinship between a mother and son who mutually forego identifying themselves as mother and son, Nakagami represents the silenced voice which narrates deep mutual love and compassion for subalternity without imposing new forms of oppression.

Chapter Six, the final chapter of the thesis, discussed Nakagami's last novel, *Keibetsu*, which depicts the life experience and consciousness of a young migrant woman in early 1990s Japan. The protagonist is the topless dancer, Machiko, who drifts between Kabukichō, Tokyo's notorious entertainment district, where she works as a stripper, and her lover's

rural town, where she is the wife of an heir to a wealthy family. Unlike the majority of Nakagami narratives, this work has no relation to Kumano or the Burakumin context. Citing Levy, I argued that, having lost the Burakumin *roji* homeland as his narrative base, Nakagami looked to itinerant people as embodiments of geopolitical subalternity.

A driving force that propels the *Keibetsu* narrative is the frustration felt by the heroine as she seeks control of her body while also being the object of the male gaze. Machiko challenges conventional gender norms through gazing back to the men and women who look at her as immoral or polluted. I discussed with reference to the perspective of 1990s feminist studies the trace of this perspective that is evident in Nakagami's attempt to depict a woman with agency. Drawing on Butler's essay *Gender Trouble*, I examined Machiko as a desiring subject who is the 'trouble' who subverts masculine autonomy and hegemonic gender norms. For the masculine communal collective depicted in the narrative, Machiko is an incomprehensible 'mystery' and her unconventional behaviour is regarded as 'scandal.'

In Kabuki-chō, although her feelings are rather problematic, Machiko feels independent of and equal to men, and is therefore able to, in her words, keep a fifty-fifty relationship with a man. However, after eloping with her lover, she becomes a woman who is humiliatingly involved in a homosocial triangle involving her husband and his community. Contesting the rural community by committing 'adultery' with local men, Machiko appropriates the device of male homosociality. While Machiko's 'adultery' demonstrates her defiance of male norms, it paradoxically reveals her dependency on these norms to assert herself.

I conclude by once more drawing attention to the fact that referencing Spivak's work has permitted me to read Nakagami in a way that reveals previously unrecognised aspects of his

work. Without this theoretical base my profiling of Nakagami's sexually stigmatised woman would not have been possible. Through revisiting the voices of key male characters, I articulated how the masculinist practice and ideologies that underpin many of the writer's works produce gendered subjects and render meaningless the voices of the women characters who narrate love, desire, and resistance.

We should never forget that Nakagami's narratives reveal the paradoxical circumstances of oppressed women who, although they strongly desire to have their voices heard, lack the 'infrastructure' necessary for this to happen in the strongly masculinist communities in which they are located. Any attempt to access this infrastructure generally results in harsh punishment. In order to assume the voice of the 'divine' law in her challenge against the human law of the father and society, Satoko must endure the severe penance of the water cult, that is, must physically harm herself to purify her 'polluted' body. Although supported by her prosperous brothers as the eldest sister after returning from the brothel, the aged former prostitute, Yuki, never frees herself from the stigmatisation that is visited upon her by her own siblings and neighbours as a polluted former sex worker. While Moyo's mute voice is understood by her secret son as a mother's protective love, she is eternally silenced by the unspeakable memory of rape. As a worker in the sex industry, Machiko accepts living near a notorious entertainment district controlled by criminal organisations. As a wife, she must expose herself to the violence of the gaze of the conventional community that endlessly humiliates her as a sexual object or immoral deviant.

These women characters demonstrate that right up until the time of his death, Nakagami Kenji continued working on the paradox of representing the silenced voice of

society's Other. This Other was not confined merely to transgressive men, but also included the doubly oppressed women of Japan's subaltern community. There is no doubt that Nakagami's narratives remain relevant present-day society at a time in which we have each become complicit in the process of silencing the Other through our association – willing or unwilling – with mainstream ideologies such as globalisation and neoliberalism. In this sense, Nakagami's narratives of the silenced will continue to inspire us when we pose the paradoxical question: 'How can the voice of the voiceless be represented?'⁶²⁴

⁶²⁴ As an evidence of this, I add a note here that the release of a film version of *Keibetsu* in 2011, with Wakamatsu Kōji's adaptation of *Sen'nen no yuraku* the following year, brought renewed attention to the works of this Japanese writer who died two decades ago.

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Appendix 1: The Map of the Kii Peninsula



This map, entitled 'Shōsetsu no butai' (The Scene of Novel), is provided as a separate insert in *Nakagami Kenji zenshū* Vol.3.

Appendix 2: Akiyuki's Family Tree

